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All other inquiries should be directed to the editorial office.

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THE NATIONAL INTEREST

NUMBER 44, SUMMER 1996

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THE NATIONAL INTEREST (ISSN 0884-9382) is published quarterly in Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter issues by National Affairs, Inc. Articles appearing in this journal are abstracted and indexed in P.A.I.S., Historical Abstracts, International Political Science Abstracts, U.S. Political Science Documents, Political Science Abstracts, and America: History and Life; and available on microfilm from University Microfilms International. © 1996 by National Affairs, Inc. *The National Interest* is printed by William Byrd Press.

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Post-Communism

An Infantile Disorder

Johnathan Sunley

IT IS EASY to describe developments in the countries of the old Eastern Bloc. You don't even need to be very well-informed about what's going on: an acquaintanceship with the past will serve you much better than a knowledge of recent events. Indeed, in this part of the world, to know the past—especially the distant past—*is* to understand the present.

That, or something very like it, is the major premise of many of the better-known books to have appeared over the last few years, purporting to offer Western readers a guide through the tangled terrain of Central and Eastern Europe. The very titles of works like *The Rebirth of History*, *Balkan Ghosts*, *Exit into History*, and *The Haunted Land* reflect that premise.[1] According to what we may term the Myth of the Past, this region is imprisoned by/impaled on/possessed by (pick your metaphor) its own history, and nothing short of collective exorcism or some more modern form of psychotherapy will set it free.

Most of the time, this curse is said to manifest itself as nationalism, a sub-set of the myth so misleading and so widespread that it deserves a separate label—The Myth of Nationalism—and separate handling. Fortunately, however, the familiar refrain goes, the majority of these countries have—after an initial outbreak of the nationalist malady—done the sensible thing by committing themselves to the hands of experienced and expert practitioners (mostly reformed communists, now champions of the free market and democracy) who, after all, know the patient better than anyone. As a result, their condition and prospects are said to be improving by the minute. So to the Myth of the Past and the Myth of Nationalism a third misjudgment may be added, completing the West's distorted perspective of this area: the Myth of a Bright Future.

Johnathan Sunley is director of the Budapest branch of the Windsor Group, a pro-reform lobby active throughout Central Europe. He has lived in Hungary since 1991.

The Myth of the Past

THE SURGE OF INTEREST in the history of Central and Eastern Europe that occurred after 1989 is not difficult to explain. During the Cold War, the countries behind the "iron curtain" were treated by academics as a more or less homogeneous area. Indeed, the communist system was quite effective in imposing a superficial uniformity on

[1]Misha Glenny, *The Rebirth of History: Eastern Europe in the Age of Democracy* (New York: Penguin, 1990); Robert D. Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993); Eva Hoffman, *Exit Into History: A Journey Through the New Eastern Europe* (London: William Heinemann, 1993); Tina Rosenberg, *The Haunted Land: Facing Europe's Ghosts after Communism* (New York: Vintage, 1995).

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places as far apart as Brno in the Czech Republic and Bishkek in Kyrgyzstan. After its collapse, it was natural that Western intellectuals and journalists should seek to make up for lost time and to rediscover their differences—especially now that so many former republics and regions were being reborn as independent states.

It wasn't long, though, before earnest attempts to distinguish Slovenia, Slavonia, and Slovakia gave way to an impatient feeling that the area once marked out by the Warsaw Pact had more history than it could handle. In truth, this area only has more history than can be handled comfortably by those who have no serious interest in it, and who are concerned to use it for some extraneous purpose. Chief among these is the instrumentalization of ethnic disputes, by which is meant the use of often fabricated or exaggerated histories of past conflict to justify political or other kinds of careers—of this, more below.

There are also more innocent misuses of the Myth of the Past. I well remember, for example, British Prime Minister John Major telling a Conservative Party conference how proud he had been to have attended events in Poland commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising—when what he meant to refer to was the 1944 Warsaw uprising (in which tens of thousands of non-Jewish Poles perished). Or the look on the faces of some Slovak politicians on being informed by an assistant chief-of-staff at Allied Command Europe that their country had always been on the wrong side of the religious fault-line (another common metaphor, this) dividing Western Catholicism from Eastern Orthodoxy.

From this impatience and ignorance have followed policy prescriptions. Since the collapse of communism, no senior Western policymaker has engaged himself more with this region than Richard Holbrooke. Yet the speech he delivered at the first-ever session of the North Atlantic Assembly held in a former member-state of the Warsaw Pact pushed this cliché of all-determining history to its limits. "The people of Central and Eastern Europe now have a real opportunity to create a lasting peace", he intoned. "But to do so, they must be prepared for one final act of liberation, this time from the unresolved legacies of their own tragic, violent and angry past. . . . History as our guide and teacher, history as a cautionary tale that informs us, is indispensable to our self-awareness. But can this region free itself from history's ghosts and myths?"[2]

The principal ghosts he had in mind, predictably enough, were unresolved territorial disputes. But there were also the demons of political extremism, intolerance, xenophobia, backwardness, and anti-semitism, to which this region is supposed to be peculiarly susceptible. Certainly these are the characteristics dwelt upon at length by such authors as Misha Glenny and Robert Kaplan. Writers of this type seem to derive a perverse pleasure from lurid descriptions of, for example, the fascist Iron Guard movement in pre-war Romania or the right-wing *Endecja* (National Democratic Party) in Poland. For its richness in such phenomena, the period *entre les deux guerres* is undoubtedly their favorite. Initially having to find their feet as independent states, and later caught between a resurgent Nazi Germany on one side and the Bolshevik Soviet Union on the other, the fragile states called into being at Versailles would find the era a difficult one. But then Western Europe was not exactly a model of stability and prosperity during these years either, and it might well be asked whether the politics of interwar Italy, or even France, were significantly more orderly or enlightened than those of Hungary or Bulgaria.

The point, though, is not to put the peoples of what later became known as "the other Europe" into some kind of beauty contest with their Western counterparts. Defenders of the former are always quick to counter the dis-

[2]Address by Richard C. Holbrooke, assistant secretary of state for European and Canadian affairs, to the spring session of the North Atlantic Assembly, Budapest, May 1995.

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paraging approach of historians like Eric Hobsbawm by noting that medieval Hungary's commitment to constitutionalism took the form of a set of written prerogatives promulgated just seven years after England's Magna Carta, or that Renaissance Poland saw performances of Shakespeare in the playwright's own lifetime. And it is indeed important to know that the political, cultural, and intellectual traditions on which the peoples of this region can draw are the match of those available to the West. But at the same time it is hard to see why these earlier Golden Ages should be any more relevant to the current prospects of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe than the interwar lapses so roundly condemned by the Hobsbawms of the world.

IF ONE IS GOING to turn to the past at all to help explain present events in this part of the world, then surely the most relevant years are the most recent ones. It is the immediate past—the period *since* 1945—together with the way in which the communist era has been subsequently handled, that holds the key to an understanding of current developments. For comparison's sake, consider the earlier but parallel experience of Germany. In 1945, this was a country that might well have been said to have been broken under the weight of its own history. Within a decade, however, the principal part of that country, the Federal Republic, was sailing along as an unburdened flagship of the West's postwar order. Absolutely crucial to this unburdening were the trials and investigations that took place after 1945. In the Western zones, some 5,025 Nazis were sentenced on the main charge of genocide, of whom 406 were executed. In addition, some thirteen million questionnaires were completed by party members, which led by 1947 to over two hundred thousand arrests.[3] This thorough process not only gave Germans a strong sense of expiation, but eliminated the Nazi Party at every level to such an extent that there could be no question of it continuing to function as a social network or economic entity.

Nothing of this kind happened after the collapse of communism. The acquittal earlier this year of Bulgarian party leader Todor Zhivkov (who had, in any case, only been sentenced for corruption) means that there is now no former communist ruler from any country of the old Eastern Bloc behind bars (with the arguable exception of Albania, where Enver Hoxha's wife is still in prison, again on grounds of embezzlement). Nor was it only those on the level of Honecker or Husák who slipped through the net. In Poland, the murderer of Father Popieluszko was set free in 1994 for good behavior. In Romania, the last officials imprisoned for involvement in the massacres of December 1989 were released as early as 1993. And Hungary now boasts a prime minister who makes no secret of having served in the vigilante squads that helped the Russians mop up after the 1956 uprising.

It is important to distinguish between the two different types of "de-communization" that existed after 1989. The more useful and controversial was essentially forward-looking: to prevent those who had worked for or with the secret police, or in the higher reaches of the party, from henceforth occupying a prominent role in public life. Only the Czechs succeeded in passing a lustration law to that effect, and to this day the Czech Republic is the only country in the region where the former Communist Party, sporting whatever new name or ideology, does not constitute a significant political force. The other kind of de-communization, usually given the pejorative label "historical justice", would have sought simply to bring to book those who had perpetrated the worst abuses of the communist system, and thereby pass some kind of moral judgment on the preceding forty-five years of terror, spoliation, and tyranny. It wasn't asking much, one might have thought, to hold accountable those who had enforced martial law in Poland or

[3]Figures from David Pryce-Jones, *The Strange Death of the Soviet Empire* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1995), p. 13.

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crushed the uprising in Hungary. One would have been wrong. But for a handful of bit-players, no one has been sentenced for these crimes, and in both countries the burden of proof in the wider sense increasingly rests on those who regard these actions as treasonable, or even merely condemnable.

The devastating consequences for these countries of failing to de-communize will be examined later. Here it is necessary to see how this failure came about. Returning to the precedent of postwar Germany, it is true that a "victors' justice" was imposed on that country. True and hardly surprising, given that few societies in such a debauched and devastated state possess the moral reserves or legal instruments to impose this type of process on themselves. The point is underlined by the fact that, several decades later, the opening of the Stasi files and mass dismissals of East German teachers would probably not have happened but for West German pressure. The rest of the region, unfortunately, received no such outside leverage to help those individuals and parties who urged the need to confront the past head-on.

What they did receive instead was a barrage of criticism from Western jurists and commentators who warned against the dangers of "McCarthyism" and "witch-hunts." For a couple of years after 1989, no newspaper article about Central and Eastern Europe was complete without some example of an alleged miscarriage of justice used to discredit the idea of de-communization as a whole. Even lustration in the Czech Republic only went ahead in the teeth of furious opposition from Helsinki Watch, the International Labor Organization, the *New York Review of Books*, *The New Yorker*, and other self-appointed custodians of tolerance and forgiveness.

Such Western views, of course, chimed with those held by many leading liberal intellectuals and politicians in these countries themselves. Indeed, due to their perfect English and ear for a quotable soundbite, individuals such as Bronislaw Geremek in Poland, Jiří Dienstbier in the Czech Republic, and János Kis in Hungary were among those whose opinions were most often cited by Western journalists. Though many of them had been dissidents with a long track-record in the underground opposition, such figures were also very often the children of leading communists who had been purged in the show-trials of the late 1940s and early 1950s. Naturally this made them squeamish about the prospect of new trials—however different in need and nature. Their attitude toward former top-ranking party officials was further complicated by the fact that in many cases they had negotiated with those officials during the roundtable talks leading up to the dismantling of the communist system, and in doing so had lost perspective of their faults. In any case, these intellectuals were the people who fed the Western press with ready parallels to the world of Kafka or the arbitrary authoritarianism of the interwar years. Their main message was that politics and justice must not be mixed, and that only by a period of self-denial in this respect could these societies exorcise those ghosts of the past that so many Westerners found troubling.[4]

Despite being couched in the neutral language of the "rule of law", this message concealed a clear political agenda of its own—as its proponents well knew. Yet in his address in Budapest, Holbrooke cited approvingly from the utterances of György Konrád and Ádám Michnik: two former dissidents who through numerous articles, speeches, and interviews after 1989 made substantial contributions to the prevention of lustration and to the rehabilitation of ex-communists in Hungary and Poland respectively. The day before this speech, Holbrooke celebrated his recent marriage to the Hungarian-born writer, Kati

[4]Of the books mentioned at the beginning of this essay, Rosenberg's *The Haunted Land* differs from the others in focusing on the legacy of the communist rather than pre-communist past. Her fashionable conclusion, however, is that lustration mimics the thinking and methods of the ideology it seeks to uproot, that is, Leninism.

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Marton, with a reception at the home of the U.S. ambassador in Budapest. Among the guests were President Árpád Göncz—whose refusal to sign some pieces of legislation passed by the previous parliament had derailed attempts to come to terms with the communist era—along with several members of the new government who had been the direct beneficiaries of his magnanimity in this respect. Conspicuously absent were members of the 1990-94 government who had initiated these attempts. In what was no doubt held to be a triumph of American policy toward the region, the pardoned mingled with their pardoner—and the ghosts of history were last seen drifting off into the Buda hills.

The Myth of Nationalism

"NATIONALISM", we are told, "is back." Indeed, "there is no political or social force that can match the power of nationalism in Eastern Europe." And, as a result, "this vast region, including its neighbors in the Transcaucasus and Syria, Iraq and Iran, has become the most explosive region on earth."[5] While even those who see it writ large in contemporary developments may be prepared to admit that history's presence in the former communist countries is a rather spectral affair, nationalism is different. It is real, it is omnipresent, and it is known to be lethal.

In these pages and elsewhere, Noel Malcolm has dispatched the view that "ancient ethnic hatreds" are to blame for the war in the former-Yugoslavia.[6] He does not claim, of course, that there are no such things as nations in southeastern Europe, or that national aspirations and grievances have played no role at all in the worst conflict on this continent since the Second World War. What he does say is that it took an immense amount of political agitation, and meticulous military planning by certain individuals, before the feelings of Serbs, Croats, and Bosnian Muslims were mutually inflamed to the extent that they could contribute to the conflict. And even then they did not cause it.

The main individual in question, Slobodan Milošević, is not even from Serbia, and in recent years has evinced precious little interest in the crusade of Serbian nationalism—as befits a craven opportunist whose career until not long ago was divided between the Communist Party bureaucracy and banking. The same holds true for his principal proxy for much of the time in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Radovan Karadžić, who like Milošević, is from Montenegro. Furthermore, the person who did more than any other before the outbreak of fighting to ensure that rural Serbs living in the Croatian Krajina would be surprisingly well-armed is an ethnic Hungarian, Mihalj Kertes, whose attachment to Milošević—like that of so many of his most dependable cohorts—is based on a background in the old Yugoslav secret service. One could go on. How was it, for example, that Dubrovnik became an early target of Belgrade's annexationist designs, when the Serbian proportion of its pre-war population was less than 10 percent (and indeed, when, on her famous travels, Rebecca West found the Dalmatian port so lacking in Orthodox mystique that she moved hurriedly on)? In Sarajevo, by contrast, there lived a relatively high number of Serbs—many of whom joined the supposedly *jihad*-bent Bosnian army, to face being shelled by their ethnic brothers in the surrounding hills.

The real challenge, though, for those who perceive the entire post-communist world as one vast powder keg of competing nationalisms, is to explain why some inflammable trouble spots spontaneously combust while others do not. In the Balkans, the ethnic odds (so to speak) were stacked as much against Macedonia as Bosnia, yet the former did not

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[5]Quotations are from, respectively, Charles A. Kupchan, "Nationalism Resurgent" in Kupchan, ed. *Nationalism and Nationalities in the New Europe* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995); Glenny, *The Rebirth of History*, p. 204; Richard C. Holbrooke, address to the North Atlantic Assembly.

[6]Noel Malcolm, "Bosnia and the West: A Study in Failure", *The National Interest* (Spring 1995).

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explode. Why? Again, the very existence of sizable Hungarian minorities in Slovakia and Romania, or sometimes even of a couple of hundred thousand Poles in Lithuania, is taken to be potentially explosive, and a reason for legitimate concern among those Western organizations (like the EU and NATO) that these countries aspire to join. Over the last couple of years there seem to have been signs—in Central Europe, at least—of serious efforts to defuse this problem. The pace of high-level cross-border visits has quickened. Bilateral basic treaties (usually of "good neighborly relations and friendly cooperation") have been agreed, and in some cases—most notably between Hungary and Slovakia—ratified. Palpably relieved, the Western organizations that had even begun hinting that such treaties might be one of the conditions of their eastward expansion have taken these moves too much at face value. What these positive-seeming steps justify is not relief—rather, they are grounds for suspecting just how "post-communist" those who contrived the fake fraternal bonhomie of yesteryear really are.

It is, however, the source of that internationalism that today offers the best lessons in the instrumentalization of ethnic disputes. Though many Sovietologists have become overnight authorities on such subjects as Russian regionalism and Muslim fundamentalism in Central Asia—subjects that had always escaped their earlier attention—their overall approach to the study of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) shows a high degree of earlier short-sightedness. To this day, for example, the fighting that broke out in 1992 in Moldova, when Russian-speaking separatists succeeded in detaching a strip of the country along the left bank of the river Dniester and turned it into an independent republic, is presented as a textbook study of how civil wars can start when the dominant nation in a new state fails to take into consideration the anxieties of the minority. Never mind that in this case there were actually far more Russian speakers living in the *rest* of the republic, and that these, while anxious about the elevation of Romanian to the state's official language, showed no inclination to take up arms against it. But then, neither would the Russians (not to mention the Ukrainians, who outnumbered them) in Transnistria have done so had it not been for the presence of the Russian Fourteenth Army, which was glad to find any excuse for maintaining its strategically situated base around Tiraspol ("the gateway to the Balkans", as its then-commander, General Aleksandr Lebed, used to observe).

As if this were not sufficiently destabilizing, the Moldovan authorities then had to face similar claims for autonomy in another part of the country from the Gagauz, a Turkic people of Christian religion, who protested the right to a language hardly any of them had spoken for two hundred years. The outcome of this well-choreographed mayhem was predictable: loss of power for the parties that had championed Moldovan statehood in the first place; their replacement by ex-communists, reborn as men of moderation and stability; and closer links with the CIS. Today, Moldova's ethnic problems seem to have been miraculously solved. The Russian Fourteenth Army, on the other hand, is (under a new name) still there.

If anything, Moldova is a case study in straightforward power politics. Similar sequences of events—sudden flare-ups of tensions and occasional hostilities between ethnic groups only a few specialists have heard of, followed by equally sudden de-escalation and disappearance of the crisis—have happened all across the old Soviet Union. Were these genuinely rooted in nationalism, such episodes would have led to the hardening of stances, and to bringing increasingly radical patriots to power. The reality has been the opposite: from Crimea in Ukraine to the Fergana Valley in Kyrgyzstan, leading figures from the old communist establishment have played the card of ethnic conciliation and offered a "mature" relationship with Moscow.

Nowhere has this been truer, and more tragic for the local populations, than in the three Transcaucasian republics—Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan—specifically men-

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tioned by Holbrooke. With the exception of the Baltic region, no area of the Soviet Union saw a greater cultural awakening in the perestroika period. This was followed in the cases of Georgia and Azerbaijan by the direct election, with massive popular support, of presidents whose persecution in the Soviet era appeared to be the best guarantee of the geopolitical re-orientation of these newly-independent states. Today this is all a distant memory. Zviad Gamsakhurdia in Georgia and Abulfaz Elchibey in Azerbaijan were overthrown in coups, the background to which was provided by strange "ethnic conflicts" in which small, poorly armed peoples—in Georgia the Ossetians and Abkhaz; in the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan the Armenians—consistently got the better of much larger forces. They did so, of course, with Russian backing. Given what was (and is) at stake in the region, namely the Caspian Sea oil reserves, perhaps one cannot be surprised or even shocked by the crudeness of the *divide et impera* tactics used to restore two old Soviet trusties—Eduard Shevardnadze and Gaidar Aliev—whose obsequiousness even Brezhnev found excessive. What may have been harder to stomach for those in the countries of the "near abroad" who found their independence undermined was hearing Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev's familiar lecture from this period about the perils of "aggressive nationalism."[7]

KOZYREV WAS NOT alone in identifying nationalism as the most virulent plague threatening the region. In 1994, George Soros told a congressional subcommittee: "All in all, I see hardly any chance of a return to communism. Communism as a dogma is well and truly dead. The real danger is the emergence of would-be nationalist dictatorships—I call them 'NADIs' for short."[8]

In the area once referred to sweepingly as "the Eastern Bloc", there were just nine states at the start of the *annus mirabilis* of 1989. Now there are twenty-seven separate states in that same area. Among these there are a good many dictatorships—but hardly any deserving the label "nationalist" or even "national." And while the proliferation of flags and seats around the tables of international organizations may be irritating to those convinced of worldwide trends toward the "pooling of sovereignty", looked at more closely, this eruption of new Olympic teams—which is about all the phenomenon amounts to—should give them few grounds for discomfort.

On the territory of the former Soviet Union, for example, there is now not one country where the Popular Fronts that mushroomed in the late 1980s, to channel nationally-based opposition against both Russian hegemony *and* the one-party system, are still in power. Fragmented, divided, unfunded, and in a number of cases harassed, intimidated, and simply banned, they have all to a greater or lesser extent been marginalized by the "partyocracies" (to borrow a useful old Sovietological term) whom they challenged and briefly overthrew. Indeed, visit the usually decrepit office of such an organization today—where some learned and courageous academic may often be found holding forth about the hopeless cause of "unifying the opposition"—and you will see immediately how they have

[7]For a well-documented account of the re-imposition of dictatorial regimes loyal to Moscow in this region, see the British Helsinki Human Rights Group's *The Caucasus Reports* (1996). This suggests that what might be called the "mother of all ethnic conflicts", that is, the war for Nagorno-Karabakh, which began as long ago as 1988, may not have been all that it seemed to Western observers even then. On how the "near abroad" as a whole came even nearer, see Mark Almond, *Russia's Outer Rim* (Institute for European Defense and Strategic Studies, 1995).

[8]George Soros, *The Dangers of Post-Communism* (New York: Soros Foundations, 1994), p.7.

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come full circle. Further west, something similar applies to, say, Poland's Solidarity, Bulgaria's Union of Democratic Forces, and the Hungarian Democratic Forum, all of which tasted power but are today shadows of their former selves.

Soros is right that communism as a dogma is dead. But, then, so it has been from at least the mid-1960s. The problem facing supposedly "post-communist" societies is not a revival of that ideology, but the survival of power structures that escaped the "revolutions" of 1989 more or less unscathed. Again, the consequences for the "emerging democracies" of the successful self-entrenchment of the *nomenklatura* will be examined later. What needs to be understood here—especially when conventional wisdom holds that the eclipse of the Popular Fronts is actually a positive sign of political normalcy and maturity—is how a consensus arose that Soros' "NADIs" were indeed the real danger for the region. One explanation is that through his network of "Open Society" foundations—whose conspicuously well-appointed offices rapidly established themselves as one of the region's new common denominators—Soros himself made an immense contribution to setting the terms of debate in these countries.[9]

Philosophically speaking, there is much to be said for the "open society" as defined by Soros' intellectual mentor, Karl Popper. The question is whether in this particular context such a society has been a viable or desirable goal. Regarded from one perspective (the liberal one, usually), communism in Central and Eastern Europe represented a "closed system" that needed to be pried open through introducing new patterns of thought (critical, pluralistic) and behavior (unchecked, tolerant). While true up to a point, this misses the principal feature of what used to be called "real existing socialism"—namely, the sheer devastation it left in its wake. For forty-five years (seventy in the case of the Soviet Union) all traditional moral and religious beliefs were deliberately crushed, and all associations and institutions embodying them systematically uprooted, leaving behind a blasted landscape marked by cynicism, nihilism, and alienation. What these countries desperately needed after 1989—and still need—was breathing space in which traditional values and practices could be carefully nurtured and, where necessary, grafted from without. What they got was a crash course in liberalism that did nothing for their sense of cultural or political disorientation—but which created ideal conditions for a comeback by the communists.[10]

How often after 1989 were we warned, for example, about the dangers of religious fundamentalism (whether Catholic in Poland, or Muslim in Central Asia)? How often did Western journalists or self-appointed "watchdogs" take some trivial episode like the reburial of Admiral Horthy (and even Cardinal

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[9]For some idea of the size of that contribution, consider that in 1993 his foundations were operating in twenty-three different countries with a total budget of $300 million. In addition, Soros has promised an additional $200 million of support over the next two decades to the Central European University. Current GDP per capita in Hungary (home to the CEU) is less than $4,000, and in a mid-level CIS country like Moldova it is barely one-tenth of that. For a perceptive understanding of the political and commercial leverage generated by philanthropy on this level, see Connie Bruck, "The World According to Soros", *The New Yorker*, January 23, 1995.

[10]The Council of Europe distinguished itself on this front. In 1994, as part of its overall goal of "cultural cohesion", it launched a "European Youth Campaign against Racism, Xenophobia, anti-Semitism and Intolerance." This took such forms as "Trains of Tolerance" shuttling across the continent to promote the slogan, "All different, all equal." In Hungary, this resulted in a series of video clips shown at metro stops featuring a black person, a Native American, homosexuals, a yuppie, a punk, a prostitute, and a Hungarian peasant all traveling together in harmony in the same compartment. Passers-by were bewildered.

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Mindszenty) in Hungary, or the reintroduction of the *kun* as Croatia's currency, and inflate it into a crass provocation typical of a tendency toward extremism and authoritarianism? Yet as anybody who knows these all too secular and politically passive societies will confirm, "ayatollah-ism", "right-wing radicalism", "irredentism", "anti-semitism", "neo-fascism" even, are practically non-existent. These are slogans (straw men, perhaps) created and popularized by a combined effort on the part of *bien pensant* opinion in both Western and former Eastern Bloc countries, and used by former communist parties in the latter to lift themselves out of political quarantine. Who now remembers *Pamyat* in Russia, for example, or those strange paramilitary groupings that were supposed to come to power in Ukraine? Certainly the Western press was right to seize on the passing positive remark made by Belorussian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka about Hitler—though almost no one commented on the gushing tribute paid earlier in 1995 by Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze to Stalin. In any case, and as Belarus' recent virtual reunification with Russia shows, the real problem there—as in so much of Central and Eastern Europe—is not nationalism but rather its absence.

The Myth of a Bright Future

NO INDUSTRY in any post-communist country has taken off quite like the business of outsiders commenting and advising on the progress these countries are making. The "transition" (as it is known) has opened up vast new areas of opportunity for academics and consultants alike. Would that some of this boom had trickled down to the economies of the countries in question. Seven years after the "velvet revolutions" of 1989, most people in Central and Eastern Europe are apt to feel that "building capitalism" is proving hardly less arduous or unrewarding than "building communism" once was. For them, the "transition" (which hints at an intermediate phase between the "plan" and the "market") has turned into a seemingly everlasting state of affairs analogous to the "real existing socialism" that was supposed to precede the blissful arrival of communism proper but which was constantly extended.

Are these pessimistic subjective perceptions accurate? What do the statistics say? With output everywhere shown to have plummeted and with the entire area still stuck in recession, even such ebullient reformers as Jeffrey Sachs and Anders Åslund (both of whom straddle the divide between academic and consultant, and might therefore be suspected of having a vested interest in "talking up" the triumph of their policies' consequences) are at a loss for words, beyond pointing out that some worst-case predictions such as famine in Russia have not come true, or that the relative rate of decline in production in Ukraine has started to slow.[11] Speaking in absolute terms, however, the IMF's own calculations are that not even in Poland (the region's much-vaunted "tiger economy") will living standards return to their 1989 levels before 2010 at the earliest. Similarly, the current annual report of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development contains a page of graphs dramatically illustrating the post-1989 deterioration throughout the region through key social indicators such as birth and mortality rates. Not quite sure how to put a cheery reading on such trends, the text contorts itself into self-contradiction: "Thus, rapid and successful transition toward a market economy may not in itself be sufficient to prevent a decline in the standard of living."[12]

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[11] Åslund, at least, has started to shift his position—or at any rate the goal posts. For example, his remarkably confident article in the September/October 1994 issue of *Foreign Affairs* entitled "Russia's Success Story" makes almost no mention of the phenomenon of rent-seeking, which, in a more recent contribution to *Transition* (January 26, 1996), he says not long ago amounted to 80 percent of the country's GDP. Such inconsistency does not increase the credibility of his claim in the latter that this problem is now under control.

[12] *Transition Report 1995* (London: European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 1996), pp. 23-24.

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Visitors to the region unversed in macroeconomics, but with vivid memories of the queues and empty shelves of the communist era, may be tempted to trust their immediate impressions and return home with tales of the vibrancy of street-trading or the mushrooming of new outlets of Benetton and McDonald's, as though this constituted some kind of transformation. On one level it does. No one can deny the breakthrough in terms of private ownership or trade liberalization. Indeed, where these rights and policies exist (which is by no means everywhere in the old Eastern Bloc), it is even possible to speak of the emergence of a market economy in the most literal sense, one consisting predominantly of stallholders and self-employed service providers. That said, it is easy to exaggerate the importance of this "kiosk capitalism." The bulk of goods bought and sold tends to be imported consumer products, and the activity as a whole is very often unlicensed, untaxed, and not infrequently takes the form of barter.[13]

Contrast with this early nineteenth-century Britain, that famed nation of shopkeepers. In the British case, behind those shopkeepers stood manufacturers like Boultons, Wedgwoods, and Cadburys. And behind these manufacturers stood an emerging framework of credit institutions and capital markets, all underpinned by the rule of law and by a judicial and political system winning increasing respect for and adherence to the "rules of the game." One can readily agree with Sachs on the core practices and institutions of modern capitalism, and even on the way that in certain historical circumstances these have been transplanted and made to function successfully.[14] The problem is that we are speaking neither about textbook theory nor Meiji Japan, but about a large chunk of the Eurasian continent that for the greater part of this century has had no experience of the rule of law or even of the simple human trust that makes commercial transactions viable—and that is now coming out of this black hole with the very same people in charge (or their children, at least) who created it in the first place.

Take the case of Hungary. The first thorough research on this subject shows that one-fifth of the 1988 *nomenklatura* (that is, party officials, state bureaucrats, large enterprise managers, and prominent members of the intelligentsia) owned private businesses by 1993. Typically these were not the "mom & pop" stores noticed by visitors, but substantial concerns whose sales figures were ten times the national average.[15] It is hard to agree with those who maintain that such companies are a tribute to the business acumen of those who run and own them, when often they are sprawling trading conglomerates maintained by indulgent cross-ownership on the part of similar empires run by friends and soft loans from banks. Indeed, though these companies may be nominally private, it is difficult to say who *does* own them. The accommodating banks themselves often still belong to the state, and appointments to their boards (or discreet injections of cash to their balance-books) are decided by the party in power—to whose campaign fund the company in question did not forget to contribute. It is doubly difficult to determine ownership when these same companies buy up much of the media—and not simply because owning newspapers is intrinsically profitable, either (though naive Western voices can always be found to assure onlookers that such monopolies are the result of "market forces").

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[13]The distinction between a market economy and capitalism is well made in Alice H. Amsden, Jacek Kochanowicz, and Lance Taylor, *The Market Meets Its Match: Restructuring the Economies of Eastern Europe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994). This also makes the point that the emphasis on small and medium-sized enterprises, which accounts for a good deal of Western advice, may be misplaced when one considers that even in the United States large firms (those with over five hundred employees) account for nearly 75 percent of total manufacturing sales.

[14]Jeffrey Sachs, *Understanding Shock Therapy* (London: Social Market Foundation, 1994).

[15]Figures from Akos Rona-Tas, *The Small Transformation: The Private Sector in Hungary, 1945-94* (unpublished manuscript, 1995).

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This is a circle of a very vicious kind, as those who attempt to break, or break into, it discover. The historical opportunity for disrupting the networks that compose it has been missed. In one sense, the *soi-disant* progressives both inside and outside these societies who persuaded themselves to draw a "thick line" under the communist past are right when they defend their "pragmatic" approach by arguing that the former communist parties, now again in power, have no intention of bringing back the command economy. Such an attempt would certainly be disastrous for those at the forefront of these organizations who hope to get rich quick through asset-stripping and arbitrage on a grand scale. The main restraint imposed on them is a prudential concern to leave enough to pacify the genuinely left-wing and unionized grass-roots of their parties, with whom they cohabit purely because social tranquillity makes their larceny easier. It is risible, though, to extol the money-making abilities of this peculiar breed of "biznizman", familiar to anyone who has worked in these countries, when all the time they are effectively cutting off the branch on which they are sitting. The sharper ones are not oblivious to this, which is why they have been quick to establish bank accounts and second homes abroad.

Such options, naturally, do not exist for most people. Ask a Latvian or Lithuanian who lost his savings when a slowdown in the Russian metals export boom precipitated a banking collapse; or a Romanian who couldn't get his money out of the infamous Caritas pyramid-scheme in time; or a Bulgarian forced to pay higher food prices due to the agricultural crisis caused by the export of almost all the country's grain; or even an aspiring Czech entrepreneur who can't afford an office in the center of Prague because of the way rents have been driven up by phantom companies registered to launder money. Ask them what they think of the "transition"—and the answer is likely to disappoint the boundless optimism that is an article of faith among "transitologists."[16]

Still, even the above have it good compared with the average Russian, living in a country that now has a higher homicide rate than Mexico or Brazil (but without the compensation of a warm climate). With such massive supplies of natural resources and minerals, not to mention weapons, the opportunities and temptations in a proto-capitalist Russia were always going to rule out the conditions economists hold necessary for "perfect competition." But even the possibility of imperfect competition was jeopardized by Russia's failure—more glaring than in any other "post-communist" country—to confront the legacy of the preceding decades on either a symbolic or practical level. How "restructured" a society can it be, after all, in which the organization Memorial is still struggling ten years after it was founded to put up a permanent monument to the victims of the Gulag? In the words of one acerbic commentator, "Not one of the anti-communist ideologues repented of his or her communist past. The changing of ideological signs again allowed people to write everything off. And when people were not ashamed of their past, they had no reason to feel ashamed of their present either."[17]

For all that the term "Russian mafia" is bandied about, the latest promises by the Russian government to crack down on crime—as though this problem were separable from the activity of the authorities them-

[16]The same Panglossian approach is also characteristic of authoritative Western papers like the *Financial Times* and *The Economist*. The former, for example, reacted to the resignation of Polish Prime Minister Jozef Oleksy, who had been accused of spying, with the astonishing headline: "Anti-Communism May Hit Economy"—as though communism had been conducive to economic performance! (The Warsaw stock exchange in fact rose several points.) Both journals loathe Vladimir Meciar, the one non-communist leader in the region who has rejected neo-liberal remedies and yet still achieved a fair degree of economic success. For such impudence, *The Economist* recently likened the Slovak premier to Milošević.

[17]Boris Kagarlitsky, *Restoration in Russia: Why Capitalism Failed* (New York: Verso, 1995), p. 62.

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selves—are taken seriously by many in the West. Ordinary Russians know better. Many remain impressively defiant in the face of their country's virtually complete criminalization. Thus, in spite of their everyday need for *krysha* (literally "roof", but used to mean "protection"), less than one in ten voters allowed themselves to be taken in by the reassurances offered by the "party of power", Our Home is Russia, in the last parliamentary elections. These took the form of Prime Minister Victor Chernomyrdin's appearance on billboards around the country with his fingertips pushed together in the shape of the party's logo: a roof. A Western parallel might be, say, a poster of Giulio Andreotti holding a finger to his lips over the slogan "*Omertà*."[18]

Also misunderstood is the way these rackets spill across national boundaries, threatening to create networks of dependence based on energy supplies and arms sales that may turn out far more binding than a few choruses of "The Internationale." Russia's recent offer to Bulgaria to join the CIS, for example, was practically a formality after the setting up last year of a joint-stock gas company, in the wake of a visit from Chernomyrdin. Its Bulgarian co-chairman, Andrei Lukanov, possesses a curriculum vitae typical of the "red barons" who have survived and flourished in the transition: old enough to be known and trusted in Moscow (he is believed to have Russian citizenship); young enough to be able to pose as a reformer (he was prime minister for most of the critical year 1990, during which both the party's files and two billion dollars of foreign reserves went missing); and sophisticated enough to be accepted by the West (he was one of Robert Maxwell's early finds). The arrest earlier this year in France of a Bulgarian-American citizen, Biszer Dimitrov, whose business empire was "capitalized" by the Bulgarian and Hungarian *nomenklatura*, and which now includes interests in New York, London, Frankfurt, Vienna, and Limassol, is only the latest example of how such networks can spread in ways that may have serious commercial consequences in the West.[19]

It is, indeed, the reaction of those Western organizations and institutions that possessed the capacity to help anchor the countries of Central and Eastern Europe in political, economic, and strategic terms that has been most puzzling and disappointing to those in the region who desired genuine reform. No doubt some of the Western caution and hesitation was well-meant. NATO did not want to "create new dividing-lines" in Europe—and thereby failed to remove those that already existed. The EU proffered "technical assistance"—and watched numerous Western consulting firms grow rich on grants obtained through the PHARE and TACIS programs (the European technical assistance schemes offered to East/Central Europe and the CIS, respectively), while the West's own overall balance of trade with the emerging democracies actually improved. In the former Yugoslavia, UNPROFOR sought to be "impartial"—and thus became an accomplice to crimes committed by the aggressor. Everywhere, the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) spelled out the criteria for "free and fair" elections—but in practice turned a blind eye to count-rigging and other forms of fraud. And myriad NGOs, QUANGOs (quasi-NGOs), and private and public foundations have flooded the region with the intention of "building civil society"—an honorable enough goal, but a distraction in terms of attention and resources from the higher-level battles that still have to be fought and won.[20]

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[18]On the usage and implications of the term *krysha*, see Vladimir Shlapentokh, *Russia: Privatization and Illegalization of Social and Political Life* (Sandhurst, UK: Conflict Studies Research Center, 1995).

[19]For sobering reading on this subject, see Claire Sterling, *Crime Without Frontiers* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1994). Also James Sherr, *Russia, Geopolitics and Crime* (Sandhurst: Conflict Studies Research Center, 1995).

[20]On the West's failure to apply adequate standards to the conduct of post-communist elections, see Christine Stone, *A Democratic Deficit?* (London: Institute for European Defense and Strategic Studies, 1995). On the misguided naivete of the non-profit sector, see David Samuels, "At Play in the Fields of Oppression", *Harper's* (May 1995).

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A Fourth Myth?

IN 1989, it could be said that Central and Eastern Europe also clung to its own myth: a myth of a golden West, and of its own imminent entry into that fold. No longer. The huge reservoirs of good will toward the West that then existed, not only among intellectuals discoursing on *Mitteleuropa* but also in the hearts and minds of ordinary citizens, have been drained. And with hundreds of thousands of corpses piling up in Bosnia, Tajikistan, Chechnya, and elsewhere, while the West congratulates itself on "containing" these crises, who can blame them? What is left is a cynicism that some would say mirrors the West's own attitude toward the region. At best, this expresses itself as black humor, as when Georgians use the name "Genschers" for the German shepherd-dogs let loose on demonstrators during a visit to Tbilisi by the former German foreign minister, and "Bakers" for the type of bullets fired on protesters, even as the former secretary of state was delivering an address nearby.

Then again, it seems unreasonable to expect the eastern half of the continent to believe in the West, when the western half is showing itself increasingly incapable of doing so. It is one thing for Western politicians to overlook unsavory goings-on in, say, Pontevedro (the archetypal East European principality in Lehár's *The Merry Widow*) on grounds of "age-old cultural traditions", or even simply for the sake of trade. It is another when they extol the virtues of such a country as comparable—if not actually superior—to their own. Yet this was precisely the bizarre argument forwarded by a British Conservative Member of Parliament during the Council of Europe's recent debate on Russia's accession to that body. "Russia has come close enough to our standards of membership, closer even than countries which are already members", the Council's Parliamentary Assembly was informed. "It has held not only one parliamentary election that we have judged free and fair, but two. It has developed a market economy and 60 percent of its industry has been privatized. Would that we could say the same of some of our existing member states." [21]

Fifty years ago, the wishful thinking that characterized much policymaking toward the Soviet Union could be put down to the ideological leanings of genuine sympathizers. Slightly more than one hundred years ago, Disraeli's opposition to intervention in the Balkans to halt the atrocities there could be explained as *realpolitik*. Today, by contrast, many of these misjudgments—whether on the part of academics, bureaucrats, businessmen, politicians, soldiers—are being made for purely mercenary motives. The above-mentioned MP, addressing a group of international observers in Moscow in the aftermath of the last December's elections, expressed similar sentiments about Russia's democratic development to approving nods from the EU's ambassador. A few weeks later, this same ambassador was recalled and sacked by the European Commission for attempting to benefit from aid programs for which he was responsible, to the tune of $1.6 million.

In the final analysis, the failure to make good the gains made possible by the events of 1989 says as much about Western as Eastern Europe. Perhaps it is even a comment on our civilization as a whole. For, might *this* not be the way the world ends: not with a bang, but a back-hander? □

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[21] Official Report of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, January 25, 1996.

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. . . And Ulster Will Be Right

Peregrine Worsthorne

THE IRISH PROBLEM does not arise out of a clash between Irish and British nationalism. If it did, there would be no problem because British nationalism, being nowadays so relatively compliant, would give Ireland everything it wants. Unfortunately it is not as simple as that. For the Irish problem is a clash between two Irish nationalisms, that of Catholic Republican Ireland and Protestant Northern Ireland (Ulster), and since the first has been long celebrated and mythologized, and the second both rejected and derided, world opinion, particularly American opinion, tends to think that the first is the more deserving and the more potent. I would like to try to correct this dangerous misapprehension; dangerous because in my view it is the second nationalism, Protestant Irish nationalism, which today needs to be taken most seriously, if the whole island is to be spared a Bosnian-scale civil war.

It needs to be taken seriously because in the peace process upon which London and Dublin are now engaged, aided and abetted by Washington, it is the most likely to be infringed and violated; and although weak and dormant nationalisms can be infringed and violated with impunity and without bloodshed, vibrant and potentially violent ones, such as Ulster's, certainly cannot. Let me put it like this: Whereas it is impossible to imagine the British people, at the end of the twentieth century, fighting to prevent rule from Brussels, it is impossible to imagine the Ulster people *not* fighting to prevent rule from Dublin. When in 1886 Lord Randolph Churchill, Winston's father, warned that Ulster would fight and Ulster would be right, Gladstone's liberal government was also engaged in a peace process designed to appease Catholic Irish nationalism—a Home Rule Bill envisaging a united Ireland incorporating Ulster. Initially Lord Randolph was dismissed as madly alarmist. Only when twenty-five years later one hundred thousand Ulstermen sprang to arms to resist the same threat were the Liberals forced to realize that it was they who were mad, not Lord Randolph. At that point the massive distraction of the 1914-18 war intervened, taking Ireland off the boil. But the lesson had been learned and when the Irish Free State was eventually set up in 1920 the postwar British government reluctantly agreed to leave Ulster out. They really had no choice. It was the lesser of two evils. Whereas the majority of the people of the Republic, as it later became, were unwilling to fight, except among themselves, against partition, the Northern Ulster Irish would have fought against unification to the last man.

That basic fact of life remains as true today as it was in 1920; even more so, in one respect, as the IRA, whose members are prepared to fight for unification, represents an

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even smaller minority in the Republic now than then.[1] But while the extent of Irish Republican nationalism has decreased, Ulster's Protestant nationalism is arguably as strong as ever. It may not look like that because IRA terrorism gets all the publicity, which makes it seem as if Southern Irish nationalism is the irresistible force and Ulster nationalism the moveable object—if placed under enough pressure. In fact, the opposite is nearer the mark: Today the moveable object is Southern nationalism, while the irresistible force is Ulster nationalism. If progress is to be made, therefore, pressure needs to be put on the former rather than on the latter—a conclusion which seems never to have crossed Washington's mind. This is not only a counsel of prudence, but also of justice. Lord Randolph, remember, did not only warn that Ulster would fight but that Ulster would be right to do so. In his view it was more than simply unwise to provoke Ulster; it was wrong. Here, too, much American opinion may be misinformed, being as ignorant of the reasons for respecting Ulster nationalism as for fearing it.

Why should Ulster be right? Because, for the Protestant majority in the province, the thought of being governed by the Republic of Ireland is more than flesh and blood can be expected to bear. The roots of this state of mind lie deep in history; so deep as to be ineradicable except by the most brutal and destructive of excavations.

IT ALL GOES BACK to 1609 when King James I of England, who was King James VI of Scotland, offered his Protestant subjects grants in land to settle in Ulster. Settlements of an unofficial kind there had been since time immemorial (as there had been settlement of Irishmen in Scotland). How could it be otherwise with Scotland, at the narrowest passage, only twelve miles away from Ulster? But this royal settlement, which came to be known as the Plantation, was quite different. It was specifically designed, for reasons of state, to establish a self-consciously Protestant presence in Ireland, in case Ulster's natives, whose chiefs had opted for the Pope in the great post-Reformation religious divide, allowed their country to be used by the Catholic powers of France and Spain to force Britain back into the arms of Rome.

By this time, the beginning of the seventeenth century, the whole of Ireland was already massively settled by the English who were virtually running the country, as indeed they had been doing since the Middle Ages. But because pre-Reformation settlers were of the same religion as the Catholic natives, the two had tended to mix without intolerable friction. There was friction, bitter friction, over land, of course, since the native Irish were often dispossessed to make way for the new owners. But these material grievances had not yet been inflamed further by religious rivalry. Indeed, some of the pre-Reformation English settlers had begun to show signs of going native, seeing themselves as more Irish than the Irish. Before the Reformation this did not matter. But after the Reformation, with the Irish and British bitterly divided about religion, it obviously did. Hence the Ulster Plantation, which was Britain's attempt to ensure that at least a little bit of Ireland could be relied upon as unquestionably Protestant and loyal.

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[1]Formed during the Easter Rebellion of 1916 as a guerrilla force to fight the British, the Irish Republican Army (IRA) turned its arms on the first government of the Irish Free State in 1920, in protest against that government having signed a treaty with Britain accepting partition. A short civil war ensued in which the IRA was speedily crushed. According to the historian, Charles Loch Mowat, it then "continued a secret existence and disturbed the public peace with periodic proclamations and murders", being particularly active in the late 1930s with a campaign of terrorist bombing in England. When violence erupted in Ulster in 1968 and the long crisis there began, the breakaway Provisional IRA played a leading part.

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The Plantation's Scottish element was particularly significant in this regard. For being Presbyterians they were about as anti-Pope as it is possible to be, far more so than the relatively milk-and-water Anglicans. If the Plantation had been made up only of English Anglicans it might in time have blended with the rest of Ireland. But with the Presbyterian-Calvinist strain so predominant there was never a chance in hell. (For once the phrase is appropriate.) In other words, the special feature about this settlement was not that it was an incursion into a foreign land, the English having been doing that for centuries, sometimes even with Rome's blessing—the medieval equivalent of a UN mandate. No, the Plantation's special aspect was the purpose behind it. Unlike those many generations of earlier settlers, these, the forefathers of today's Ulstermen, were expressly chosen because they could be trusted never to integrate; they had, indeed, made a solemn covenant not to do so. Ulster's separateness, its resistance to absorption, therefore, is not some mysterious modern quirk or perversity. It was expressly planned—"programmed", in modern parlance—from the very beginning four hundred years ago; it was the province's veritable *raison d'être*.

But it was badly planned, despite the easy availability by then of Machiavelli's blueprint for princes contemplating such an operation. "Where states are acquired in a province different in language, in customs and in institutions . . . the best expedient is to establish settlement in one or two places; these will, as it were, fetter the State to you." So far, so good. King James I, "the wisest fool in Christendom, who never said a foolish thing and never did a wise one", certainly took that advice—but not the next bit. For Machiavelli went on to write: "And it has to be noted that natives must either be pampered or crushed, because there can be revenge for small injuries but not for fatal ones. So any injury a Prince does a man should be of such a kind that there is no fear of revenge."

Ulster's story would have been different had James I followed that advice. As it was, the injuries done to the Irish, being neither small enough to appease nor fatal enough to crush, left them not only wanting revenge but retaining the strength to get it. In many cases they were left in possession of their land, there not being enough settlers to take it up. Far from the Anglo-Scottish Plantation settlers forcing the great mass of the Irish natives to flee—as their more ruthless settler equivalents in America forced the great bulk of the American natives to flee—many of them remained undisturbed, willing and able to fight another day. And in due course that day came.

EIGHTY-ONE YEARS later, in 1690, exactly what King James I feared, and set up the Ulster Plantation to prevent, took place. The Catholic powers did try to use Ulster as a base from which to force Britain back into the Catholic fold, by helping King James II to land an army there after he had been deposed from the British throne for having himself gone over to Rome. Not only did the Catholic powers do what the Protestants had feared, but so did many of the settlers in Southern Ireland. Instead of rallying to Britain's new King William, formerly Prince of Orange, they supported the deposed Catholic king whose armies marched north and might well have been carried by French ships triumphantly back to England had not the Ulster Protestants, with great heroism, held them at bay. For over one hundred days besieged in Londonderry they refused to surrender. Why the new King William's fleet took so long to break the siege has never become clear. But delay it did, arousing Ulster's suspicions of British perfidy which have lasted to this day.

It was during those months of siege, in which four thousand settlers died, that Ulster's sense of nationhood was born. As the rest of Ireland, native as well as British, turned traitor, only Ulster quite literally held the fort. In the middle of the nineteenth century, the great British historian Macaulay wrote:

> Five generations have since passed away; and still the wall of Londonderry is to the Protestants of Ulster what the trophy of Marathon was to

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> the Athenians . . . the anniversary of the day on which the gates were closed, and the anniversary of the day on which the siege was raised, have down to our own time been celebrated by salutes, processions, banquets and sermons.

Nothing has changed. Nor is this is in the least surprising. Many nationalisms rest on less glorious folk memories than those of Protestant Ulster. Charged at the beginning of the seventeenth century with upholding the Protestant cause in Ireland, it could justifiably claim, by the end of the century, to have fulfilled this obligation to the letter, with little help in its hour of peril from anybody else.

But the defeat of James II's Catholic armies, while it ended Protestant England's dangers, did not end Protestant Ulster's dangers. Far from it, as the redoubtable historian Alistair B. Cooke has recently demonstrated. Londonderry remained almost as vulnerable to the unsubjugated Irish outside its gates after the siege as it had been during it. But at least after the final Protestant victory at the Battle of the Boyne in July 1690, the Protestant backlash against the Catholics was so repressive throughout the whole of Ireland that for the first time Ulster felt no need to take extra precautions. In any case, by the second half of the eighteenth century British wealth and power were such as to render any idea of further Catholic trouble in the foreseeable future almost unimaginable. Indeed so dormant did the Catholics seem that even Ulster's siege mentality began to melt, to the point where the more radical and liberal among them began to grow more resentful of imperial London's interference in local affairs, and Dublin's corruption, than fearful of Catholic treason. In this, of course, they were much influenced by the example of Protestant settlers in America, who were also challenging George III.

Needless to say, the independent Ireland they began to dream about was a Protestant and non-conformist Ireland, free of both London and Rome. True to the spirit of the eighteenth century Enlightenment—particularly of the Scottish Enlightenment—they persuaded themselves, with typical optimism, that the Catholic peasants were bound to be rational enough to prefer independence even under the wrong religion than no independence at all. Convinced of this, Wolfe Tone, their leader, formed an ecumenical movement, the United Irishmen, which, further encouraged by the success of the French Revolution, staged three uprisings throughout Ireland, all of which, including the one in Ulster, were brutally put down. But not before the great bulk of the Ulster Protestant farmers and landlords had been given a scare terrible enough to revive their siege mentality; even to make it worse, since henceforth it was not only Catholics whom they regarded with profound suspicion but also liberals and radicals who, in their naivete had awakened the dormant Catholic dogs. The United Irishmen Movement was Ulster's one great experiment in cross-border Protestant-Catholic all-Irish cooperation, and it ended in bloody disaster. Intended to free Ulster from its seventeenth-century past, its unrealistic idealism only succeeded in giving that past a new lease of life.

During the course of the nineteenth century, Ulster nationalism, hitherto largely fed by fear, was given a more modern source of strength: economic pride. For while the rest of Ireland was stuck in an agricultural rut, Ulster's flourishing new shipbuilding, engineering, and linen industries—all run by Protestant disciples of Adam Smith—carried the province triumphantly into the modern world. If, before, the Protestant Ulstermen had seen themselves as different from the rest of Ireland by reason of their religious convictions, now they saw themselves as different—and incomparably superior—by reason of their economic dynamism. In many ways it was an unfair comparison since it was Protestant repression in the whole of Ireland that reduced the Catholic population to passivity and made sure that such energies as did exist went into the priesthood, subversive politics, and literature, rather than into the professions, trade, or industry. But unfair or not, the notion took hold. Rule from Dublin would be

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unacceptable not only spiritually but materially. To the old fear that it would drag Ulster down to the slime of superstition was added the new fear that it would slow down the rate of economic growth.

That was the state of play when in 1886 Mr. Gladstone, the Liberal prime minister of the day, tabled his aforementioned Home Rule Bill proposing to include Ulster in a United Ireland. It was a mad decision from which the Liberal Party never fully recovered. Mad, but at the time understandable, since then, as now, Irish Republican nationalism was deemed to be a far more serious threat than Ulster nationalism. So it was, in narrow political sense, since there were far more Irish Members of Parliament in the British Parliament than Ulster MPs. While the Irish MPs could bring a British government down, Ulster's could exert no such leverage. But in another, much more fundamental sense—in its capacity to inspire a fighting spirit—Ulster's nationalism was quite the equal to that of Catholic Ireland. That is why, as we have seen, when it came to the crunch, Ulster's separateness was recognized. The rest of Ireland became independent of Britain in 1920 but Ulster remained a province—largely self-governing within the United Kingdom. Then as now the Irish Republican Army refused to accept Ulster's exclusion and fought a civil war within the newly independent Ireland to prevent it. But they lost that civil war. Even when Irish nationalism was at the very peak of its emotional fervor—after the famous Easter Rebellion of 1916, in which so much sacred patriotic blood was spilt—it stopped short of coercing Ulster and coerced instead those on its own side who refused to abide by this decision. In those early days of independence Irish governments were not frightened of the IRA and did not hesitate even to hang its leaders.

What has changed? How is it that after seventy years the present Irish government dares not even intern the IRA leaders, let alone hang them? How is it that Ireland's irredentist claims on Ulster, which were not strong enough to succeed at the very height of Republican nationalism in the 1920s, seem nearer to success now than they were then? To a great extent, I fear, this is America's doing.

THE IMPORTANCE OF the American dimension in Irish nationalism was recognized as far back as the late nineteenth century. Conor Cruise O'Brien, in his book *States of Ireland*, quotes the then-British home secretary, Sir William Harcourt, as follows:

> In former Irish rebellions the Irish were in Ireland. We could reach their forces, cut off their reserves in men and money and then to subjugate was comparatively easy. Now there is an Irish nation in the United States, equally hostile, with plenty of money, absolutely beyond our reach and yet within ten days sail of our shores. . . .

Most of the Irish in Ireland, only too aware of what Irish unity would mean in practice, have abandoned the cause. Only the American Irish, far enough away to escape the bloody consequences, feel inclined to carry on banging the drum. And as long as this powerful section of opinion in the world's only remaining superpower carries on banging that drum, what hope is there of any Irish government daring to sound more muffled? Nevertheless, such attitudes fly in the face of reason. For the Republic of Ireland today is a happy, tranquil society, at ease with itself as it has never been before. The old Protestant Ascendancy oppressors have been assimilated, their lands, for the most part, divided and sold; indeed today the Protestant minority in the Republic is so small—only 2 percent—as to pass almost unnoticed. There is less ethnic and religious strife in contemporary Ireland than in almost any other country in the world. At the United Nations, and in the European bureaucracy in Brussels, its officials enjoy great respect and prestige. Why then shatter this success story by pursuing even non-violently—and doing so very little to stop the IRA pursuing violently—an irredentist

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claim to Ulster which, if successful, would introduce one million alien and hostile Ulstermen to this green and peaceful isle? Even if a modest percentage of Ulstermen were to agree to some form of incorporation—of which there is not even the remotest chance—Ulster's many men of violence would not. So the only result of pacifying the IRA, by giving them a united Ireland, would be to produce an Ulster National Army which would bomb Dublin and Cork instead of—as is the IRA's way—Belfast, Londonderry, Birmingham, and London. The last thing most of the Irish want, at least with their heads and in their sober moments, is a unification that would simply transfer the violence from Britain and Ulster to the Republic itself.

But what about the half million Catholics still languishing in Ulster; does not the Republic have a sacred duty to rescue them? For most of this century it could have been argued that it did. Discrimination in jobs and housing was disgraceful, as was the gerrymandering which went on to ensure that Catholics never got their hands on the levers of power. The Ulster police, too, were far from even-handed. After decades of such treatment, Catholic grievances about civil rights eventually, in 1969, exploded into violent demonstrations that were brutally suppressed. Had not the British army intervened, much to the Catholics' relief, there would have been a real danger of inter-communal massacres. It was at this point that direct British rule from London was re-imposed, and a whole raft of reforms set in train which, in the course of the last twenty-five years, have cumulatively put an end to civil rights discrimination.

In short, the Ulster Catholic minority now gets a square deal and, because of the general social benefits they enjoy as British citizens, are much better off economically than they would be as citizens of the Irish Republic. While they may dream of Irish unity, in their conscious waking hours very few would wish to trade the present arrangements, from which they receive great benefits, for an uncertain future. They might have wanted to do so twenty-five years earlier when discrimination was still rife, but not any longer, as the opinion polls confirm.

Where the Republic of Ireland has far more justification for concern is in the matter of political power-sharing. At the moment the province is run by British officials. But were power to be devolved again, as it had been before 1969, the Catholics would clearly be due a much larger say in how it is used. So far, however, all proposals toward this end have broken down, due not so much to Protestant intransigence as to the refusal of the Ulster Catholic political parties, notably the Social Democratic Party, to accept partition. So long as the Ulster Catholic leaders continue to affirm their primary loyalty to the Republic of Ireland, so long must they be excluded from political power. On that principle the Ulster Protestants take their stand and will not budge. Who can blame them? For while loyal minorities have a right to share in government commensurate with their numbers, it is hardly reasonable to argue that disloyal ones do too.

Nor is it just a matter of the Ulster Catholics refusing to accept partition. Neither does the Irish Republic, which still refuses to amend the clauses in its constitution laying claim to sovereignty over Ulster. So if Ulster's Protestants did agree to share power with their Catholic fellow citizens, not only would they be sharing power with men and women determined to put an end to Ulster's separate identity, but with men and women known to be in active cahoots with a neighboring foreign power committed by its constitution to assisting them in this struggle. The very idea of the Ulster Protestants ever agreeing to such an arrangement is absurd—less sinister than Hitler's order to the Czech government in 1938 to share office with the Nazi leader of the Südeten German minority, but not much less certain to be refused. Power sharing the Protestants might agree to; but if this really is the concern of the Republic's government and of the Ulster Catholic leaders, the best way to achieve it would be to accept partition rather than to reject it out of hand.

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So, as I say, these irredentist claims make no sense. Not only do they prevent improvements in the lot of the Ulster Catholics here and now but, if they were realized, would bring fire and the sword—or rather AK 47s and bombs—to the whole island. Some irredentist campaigns obviously do make sense, even when pursued to the point of murderous terrorism. The Palestinians were a case in point. Driven out of their homeland and living in refugee camps, they had nothing to lose. But the Irish have everything to lose. That a few IRA fanatics might still see Irish unification as a cause for which to kill and die is not altogether surprising. Every nation has a minority of nationalist fanatics. But Irish irredentism is not just the aim of a few fanatics. It is still the official aim of the Irish government itself, the only difference being that the government, unlike the IRA, does not approve of violent means to that end. But it does precious little to stop those who do, in spite of earlier Irish governments having shown that this can be done.

WHAT IS GOING ON? Here the political analyst needs to call in the aid of a psychologist. For Irish nationalism today is not so much a state of mind, for which reasons can be adduced, as an emotional condition that has ancient rhymes to support it—plenty of them—but not a single contemporary rationale. But nobody says so. The British government does not say so; still less does Washington. So romantically powerful is the mythology celebrating Irish nationalism, and so compelling the literature, that nobody—except for Conor Cruise O'Brien—has the irreverence to challenge it. The British government, with its rightly guilty conscience about past misdeeds in Ireland, has an excuse for treading respectfully.[2] So does the American government, with the Irish vote to consider. So what I am suggesting may not be practical politics in an American election year. But sooner rather than later an American president, emulating the little boy who tells the emperor he has no clothes, must tell the Irish government that Irish nationalism, or at any rate Irish irredentism, is equally naked. Such a statement, given bluntly by an American president, could be just what is needed to bring Irish—and American—politicians and public to their senses.

In particular the president should ask the Taoiseach—the Irish Republic's equivalent a of prime minister—why he does not clamp down on the IRA—at any rate to the degree that Arafat, whose problems are incomparably greater, clamps down on Hamas. The Taoiseach will have no answers. He can't say that his electorate would not wish him to because the polls suggest that they deeply deplore the IRA. He can't say that clamping down would be useless, because everybody knows that Irish internment, unlike unilateral internment by Britain, is the only medicine the IRA fear. So what could he say? Nothing, since the true explanation is something that the Irish people know to be true but hate to admit: that they are a nation whose governments are more enthralled to patriotic ghosts from the past—Pearse, Connolly, and the rest—than to today's electorate. De Valera and his immediate successors could and did lock up the IRA and defy their irredentist fanaticisms because, having spilt British blood themselves, they had the credentials required to defy those ghosts. But today's

[2]Of Britain's many misdeeds the most horrific were Cromwell's massacre of Catholics at Drogheda in 1649 and the British government's appallingly callous reaction to the Irish potato famine in 1845-9, in which a million died—mostly Catholic subsistence small-holders entirely dependent on the potato crop—and another million emigrated abroad, mostly to the United States. Much of the intense anti-British sentiment among Irish Americans—more intense today than among the Irish themselves—can be explained by the fact that so many of their forebears had experienced British rule at its very worst. Understandably, but irrationally and dangerously, they are less concerned with securing peace today than with avenging ancestral wrongs.

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generation of ministers, being far too young to have played any part in the Easter rising—when Yeats' "terrible beauty was born"—dares not defy them.

I am not underestimating this problem. The national habit of listening to ancestral voices rather than to the voice of reason may be impossible to break. But it becomes particularly difficult to break if the rest of the world also pays homage to those ancestral voices. Unfortunately that is what the rest of the world, and in particular the United States, has been doing. While the demands of Irish nationalism are accepted as fair, progressive, and looking to the future, the resistance to those demands by Ulster nationalism is dismissed as reactionary, bigoted, and rooted in the past. Not for a moment are the Irish people told that if they continue to adhere to an ancient, anachronistic nationalism that has no place in the twenty-first century, they will be casting the gravest possible doubts on that modern, politically-correct nationalism on which they, particularly the younger generation, now set such stock. It is time they did hear that message. For if they don't soon hear it, and act on it, Ulster will fight, returning the whole of Ireland to the savagery of the seventeenth century when it all began. □

Terrorism and the Liberal Mind

William Ewart Gladstone is the classical embodiment of the weakness of the English liberal mind in trying to cope with terrorism. Gladstone admitted that his whole attitude to Ireland was changed overnight by a single Irish terrorist act: the Fenian bombing of Clerkenwell Prison in 1867. That bomb convinced Gladstone that the Irish must be suffering from terrible grievances, which it was his duty to remove. "My mission is to pacify Ireland", he declared. He tried to do this by a series of reforms, beginning with the disestablishment of the Irish (Anglican) Church in 1870.

The Irish terrorists were not interested in matters like Church disestablishment. But they were very interested in the effect which their Clerkenwell bomb had had on the mind of the leading British politician of the day. What Gladstone's reaction to that bomb taught them was that terrorism *works*. And that lesson is the most enduring legacy of Gladstonian liberalism. "Violence is the only thing the British understand", is the favorite maxim of Irish Republicans even today. Canary Wharf in 1996 is heir to Clerkenwell in 1867.

At the level of logic, the liberal mind is in the grip of a fallacy: that terrorism can be rooted out by concessions and compromise, without any need to resort to inconvenient and painful emergency measures, like internment. This is a fallacy because the terrorist mind is absolutist and unappeasable. Irish terrorists want to destroy Northern Ireland, and will not voluntarily stop anywhere short of that. . . .[They] are interested in concessions and efforts at compromise only as evidence that the bombings are moving the enemy in the right direction, however slowly.

. . . To seek to end terrorism by compromise is a fallacy in logic, because it misrepresents the nature of the phenomenon with which it attempts to cope. But beneath the fallacy lies a powerful emotional force: guilt (exceptionally strong in Gladstone, for example). British Gladstonian liberals—to be found today among both Tories and Labourites—feel chronically guilty about Britain's past treatment of Ireland. . . .[T]here are some reasons for guilt. Unfortunately, feelings of guilt are of no help in the struggle against terrorism. On the contrary, they are a resource which the terrorist knows he can exploit, and he does so with a savage satisfaction.

—Conor Cruise O'Brien, *National Review*, April 22, 1996

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Russia's Military Nadir

The Meaning of the Chechen Debacle

Anatol Lieven

"In war the moral is to the physical as ten to one." —Napoleon

THE CHECHEN WAR may come to be seen as one of the greatest disasters in Russian military history, greater than Tannenberg, greater than Tsushima; not, obviously, because of Russian losses, which have been limited, but because of what Chechnya has revealed about the humiliating depths of contemporary Russian military decline. Quite simply, the Russian army today is weaker in relative terms than it has been for almost four hundred years—a fact which, if it persists, may be of incalculable significance for the future of Eurasia.[1]

The hard evidence of the Chechen War should make Russian military weakness in the conventional field obvious to everyone—but it is still necessary to emphasize and repeat it, since so many in the West have a vested interest in avoiding the issue. It is also true of course that even when the present state of the Russian army is admitted, a major question remains as to whether this collapse is temporary and reversible, or is likely to prove long-lasting.

This question is obviously of key importance in the context of a possible Communist return to power in Russia. I myself believe that the Communists could do little in the short term to turn the army into an effective fighting force—partly because the reasons for its present collapse have above all to do with morale, and are linked to deep changes in Russian society and culture; and partly because a new round of ideologically-inspired Communist mishandling of the Russian economy would make Russia even less able to pay for major military reform than it already is today.

The evidence suggests, too, that the Russian generals are well aware of their forces' weakness—how could they not be?—and that they themselves would speedily disabuse a new Russian regime of any plans for major external aggression. The consensus among Western military attachés in Moscow is that it would take ten years at least to work such a transformation, and then only in favorable economic circumstances—which are unlikely to be forthcoming.

One would be tempted unequivocally to rejoice in this weakness—and it certainly ought to make the Balts and Ukrainians feel safer—but for two worries. The first is that the

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[1]This article is not concerned with Russian brutality in Chechnya, which has been extreme—though, alas, hardly unusual by the standards of such wars—nor with the general rights and wrongs of the Chechen War. Its subject is purely the military performance of the Russian armed forces.

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demoralization of the army derives partly from the demoralization of Russian society, which is literally that—a lack of the most elementary social morality, leading to a wholesale criminalization that indirectly threatens the West as well. The second concern is that, sooner or later, some outside power will be tempted to take advantage of Russian military weakness—as in previous ages they certainly would have done. For since intercontinental missiles do not suffer from demoralization, Russia may become a very weak conventional power and yet remain a very—indeed increasingly—dangerous nuclear one. The very weakness of the conventional forces would encourage an early recourse to the threat of using nuclear ones—as Russians have already threatened unofficially in the case of NATO expansion to the Baltic States.

Communist hopes of restoring the Soviet Union are partially shared by the Yeltsin regime, which speaks less expansively of "reintegrating the CIS." Both ambitions are largely negated by the facts of Russian military and economic weakness, and also by a sheer lack of what can only be called national will. Since much of the Western debate about Russia today—and for that matter, much of the debate in Russia itself—revolves around the question of rebuilding an empire, it seems fair enough to ask what the great European empire-builders, or imperial bards and prophets, would have made of Russia today. Their answer seems quite obvious: Rudyard Kipling, Alfred Milner, and Alfred Thayer Mahan would say that this is a feeble, shiftless, demoralized, decadent, undisciplined people. In particular, they would say that the Russian ruling elites are utterly cynical and corrupt, that they are ruthlessly obsessed with short-sighted personal gain, and that their patriotic rhetoric masks a fundamental lack of all real patriotism, spirit of self-sacrifice, and capacity for fulfilling great imperial tasks. Looking at the faces of the men now surrounding Yeltsin, it would be hard to deny the truth of this portrait.

Failure at Every Level

ON THE OTHER HAND, how Kipling would have loved the Chechens! In fairness to the Russian soldiers, one must admit that in the Chechens they have run into extraordinarily brave, tough, resourceful, and skillful opponents, who would have given even the best army in the world a hard time. This is not the place for an extended analysis of the Chechen fighters, but it may be said briefly that their success stems from a perhaps unique combination of "primitive" and "modern" military qualities. Primitive in that most Chechen units have been formed spontaneously on the basis of familial and neighborhood links, and the individual Chechen soldier has been motivated and disciplined primarily by considerations of personal and familial honor and shame; "modern" in the sense that the Chechens have used with great success relatively large-scale military units and sophisticated weapons systems. Their success in this regard, for example, contrasts sharply with the general failure of Afghan *mujaheddin* groups which I accompanied in the late 1980s. Underlying these successes is an immensely high morale rooted in Chechen national history and traditions.

Western military analysts should be looking hard at Chechen military success and Russian failure. The West's victory in the Gulf War has contributed to a current obsession with technological superiority; but it cannot be stressed too strongly that the deserts of Iraq and Kuwait, as flat and bare as a parade ground, were a highly unusual battlefield. As the world's cities spread and spread, it is likely that more and more wars in the future will take place in settings like that of Grozny.[2] Urban fighting at the best of times is a bloody, nasty, hole-and-corner, terrifying business, in which artillery and airpower are of limited use, and small groups of men often

[2]See for example Eliot A. Cohen, "A Revolution in Warfare", *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 1996).

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have to fight alone, separated from their officers and chain of command. The key to success is thus above all good infantry; and the key to good infantry is less equipment than a mixture of training and morale. The Russians in Grozny had neither; but to fight such a war successfully, Western troops too would need not just assiduous preparation, but a strong moral conviction that the war in question is necessary—or one could say, to use an antique phrase, a belief in the righteousness of their cause. The Rangers' fight in Mogadishu was obviously a small disaster compared to the Russian assault on Grozny, but may still serve as a warning about the risks of this kind of war.

The bloodiest single Russian defeat in Chechnya, and a striking example of the mixture of demoralization and tactical incompetence affecting the Russian forces, happened on December 31, 1994, when several Russian armored columns launched a massive assault on Grozny. The result was a virtual turkey-shoot. As a Chechen fighter told me, "The Russian infantry wouldn't get out of their armor to fight, so their vehicles had no cover. We just stood on the balconies and dropped grenades onto them as they drove by underneath." Several hundred Russian soldiers died in the course of a few hours, and complete disaster was only narrowly averted.

This was a failure at every level—the individual soldier, the tactical platoon and company commander, and the generals who sent their troops into the city with no plan and, as prisoners told me later, often without even any maps. Drivers were told simply to "follow the vehicle in front." The fighting in Grozny in particular also drastically exposed a classic failure of the Soviet (and Russian imperial) army: its acute lack of good and respected non-commissioned officers (NCOs).

As in Afghanistan, poorly led, poorly trained, poorly motivated infantry simply will not leave the shelter of their armored personnel carriers to brave enemy fire in the open. The result is of course that the safety of these carriers proves largely fallacious. The rocket-propelled grenade, or more precisely the hand-held anti-tank rocket, has been the Queen of Chechen battles. In urban areas and broken country, and in the hands of men trained in the Soviet army and knowing the precise weak spots of Soviet armored vehicles, it has had a most devastating effect.

But if Grozny would have presented any army with a horrible problem, the same cannot be said of the campaign in Chechnya as a whole. The most astonishing aspect of the war has not been the botched assault on Grozny, but the repeated tactical failures since, beginning with the failure to surround Grozny by driving armored formations and motorized infantry through the open country to the south, and continuing with the failures this year to trap and destroy Chechen units, even when these were cut off and surrounded in Gudermes, Pervomaiskoe, Novogroznensky, and elsewhere. The usual problem in fighting guerrillas is to get them to stand and fight. In Chechnya, the Russians have repeatedly had the Chechens pinned down—and then let them slip away.

The portrayal of Chechnya as ideal guerrilla country is to a great extent a false one. Only the southern third is mountainous. Most of the rest, where most of the fighting has taken place, is rolling open plain—ideal tank country, as demonstrated by the fact that the Soviet army had a tank training school near the Chechen town of Shelli.[3] The Russian army's failure to use tanks and motorized infantry to surround and destroy Chechen positions shows that it is no longer even capable of the massive armored assaults that used to be its tactical hallmark.

In many ways, the behavior—and the failure—of the Russian army in Chechnya is reminiscent of that of Western armies in wars like

[3]The Chechen resistance in the nineteenth century relied not on the mountains, but on the thick forests for cover, and was finally defeated when the Russian army chopped these forests down, in a primitive version of Agent Orange. This process is described in "The Woodfelling" by Lev Tolstoy, who served as a junior officer in the Caucasus.

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those in Algeria and Vietnam. The difference is that those were big countries, with big populations, hundreds of thousands of square miles of territory—much of it ideal guerrilla country—and with bordering states that supported the guerrillas. At around six thousand square miles, Chechnya is hardly bigger than Connecticut. For guerrilla units (up to battalion or even regimental strength) in an area this size to be able to run rings around what is supposed to be the third largest army on earth is nothing less than bizarre. Only an army in a truly advanced state of decadence would allow it to happen.

Shortage of Men, Shortage of Spirit

PART OF THE REASON for the failure of the Russian army is that even numerically it is not nearly as strong as it looks. Indeed, recent reports have suggested that the Russians are even incapable of launching two local offensives in Chechnya simultaneously.[4] This may seem absurd for a force with a paper strength of 1.7 million men, but the real disposable strength of the army is much lower, and the number of effective combat units lower still. According to Western estimates at the start of 1996, the Russian Defense Ministry (as opposed to the Interior Ministry forces) had only seven divisions that it even pretended were "battle-ready."

As Chechnya glaringly demonstrated, several of these "elite" divisions were also greatly under-strength. Thus, according to their official strength, the Russian forces that moved into Chechnya (including formations from supposedly elite, "battle-ready" units like the Kantemir Motorized Infantry Division and the Pskov Paratroop Division) should have numbered some seventy thousand men. The real figure, according to Russian and Western analysts, may have been as low as twenty thousand—which was simply not enough to do the job.

The soldiers, including the officers, of the Pskov Division whom I met on the road to Grozny in December 1994 were dressed like tramps. Soldiers from the Kantemir Division whom I met later in Chechen captivity were not "crack" troops by any serious international standard—the privates, and even the NCOs, were simply conscripts, several of them with less than six months' training. Some of the "elite" Interior Ministry units like the paramilitary police, OMON, and the police special reaction forces, SOBR, hurled into Grozny to replace the shattered motorized infantry in January and February 1995, were thrown together on a few days' notice from individual "volunteers" drawn from special police units all over the Russian Federation. They had then been sent to fight without even a chance to train together for so much as a day.

All that said, shortage of troops—even of crack troops—can only very partially explain the Russian failure, which has occurred in every field. In the analysis of Western military attachés in Moscow, the only arm that has functioned at all competently has been air transport. The rest—from intelligence through artillery, armor, infantry, airborne troops, special forces, the air force—have all failed miserably and repeatedly to do their job and achieve their goals.

Failures of equipment and training also provide part of the explanation, stemming above all from the savage cuts in the military budget over the past seven years. For two years before the Chechen War, the Russian air force commander, General Pyotr Deinekin, had been warning that lack of money meant that his combat pilots were getting only ten hours of flying time a year, and that this was insufficient to maintain even basic combat efficiency—a warning absolutely borne out by the event. In January of last year, I was sitting with Chechen commander Shamil Basayev at a Chechen military command post (a former Soviet military base) in the southern suburbs of Grozny while Russian fighter bombers made repeated attempts to hit the hill on which it was situated. Each time they missed or sheered off without dropping their bombs, despite the fact that the only weapon the Chechens had arrayed against them was a single heavy machine-gun. So acute was the Russian

[4]See the Open Media Research Institute briefing on Russia and the CIS, March 26, 1996.

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shortage of competent and determined pilots that early last year they were reportedly reduced to creating combat squadrons for the war from test-pilots and aerobatics teams.

In the same month, I was staying at a house in Grozny near which the Chechens had established a mortar, which went on firing for day after day, apparently from exactly the same position. Once again, repeated Russian attempts to hit it failed. A veteran French war correspondent was utterly bewildered: "But the Russians have equipment to track where mortars fire from, every modern army has it, that's why you have to keep moving mortars around. What are they playing at?" The old Russia hands present proposed a variety of explanations: that the equipment had all been defective (due to the lack of replacement spare parts, the greater part of Russian military equipment can only survive by cannibalizing other equipment); that it had all been broken and never repaired; that it had been illegally sold (possibly to Chechen "businessmen"); that the only men who knew how to use it had left the army and had never been replaced; or finally, that it contained some alcoholic or potentially alcoholic element—in which case no further explanation of its fate was necessary.

The Chechen Syndrome

Russia is facing a new wave of Chechen terror of a very different kind. More insidious than the rebel raids and hostage-taking, and ultimately more frightening because it is much closer to home, is the mindless cruelty of a new order of criminals: Russia's own returning Chechen war veterans. Sent out ill-equipped and ill-trained to fight a bloody war that few supported, the young army conscripts are coming home amoral and dehumanized, subjecting their communities and even their families to unprecedented acts of brutality. . . .

At the end of the Afghanistan war, the Soviet Union had been shocked as returning drug-ridden veterans turned to drinking, brawling, and crime. But the "Chechen syndrome" is on a completely different scale. "They come home cruel and disillusioned, the threshold of humanity no longer exists for them, and they think nothing of killing in the most horrible way", says *Izvestia* correspondent Boris Sinyavsky.

Of the 135 officers and soldiers who have returned from Chechnya to the Anzhero-Sudzhensk region in the past few months—fifteen of whom were decorated—only forty-five have found work. Most of the rest drink incessantly, hovering between freedom and jail, life and death. Three have been killed in drunken brawls.

In the final days of the Afghanistan war, the Soviet army was still respected and the returning soldiers were seen at least as having done their duty to their motherland. But today's Chechentsi are in a far worse position. They are sent to fight a war that most Russians have condemned from the outset. Even before they kiss their loved ones goodbye, the soldiers know that there will be no glorious homecoming as returning heroes, no praise for them. There is no place for their brutal skills in society, nor any counselling or associations to help them return to civilian life. Still armed, in many cases with the same weapons that they fought and killed with, they are simply turned loose, Sinyavsky says, "with a knot of bitterness inside them and bursting with negative energy."

—Miranda Anichkina, *The European* (London), February 22, 1996

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But as this last explanation suggests, even many of the military-technical failures come down in the end to a failure of morale. Russian pilots who knew what they were fighting for, loved what they knew, and were willing to risk death for it, would have hit that hill, machine-gun or no machine-gun. The Russian soldier in Chechnya—like the American soldier in the later years of the Vietnam War—simply does not want to be there, let alone to fight and die there. As with Western armies in similar circumstances, many of the brutalities and atrocities committed by the Russians in Chechnya—from the reliance on indiscriminate air-bombardment, to random attacks on civilians—stem ultimately from this deep demoralization.

The only explanation, too, of successful Chechen raids deep into "Russian-controlled territory" is that (leaving aside the possibility of bribery) Russian posts confronted with well-armed, determined Chechens frequently just stand aside—something I've seen with my own eyes.[5] As one conscript admitted to me last February, "You know, whatever they say in Moscow, I don't really think this is Russian land, and so this war has nothing to do with me. I don't want to die in a game by the leaders to cover their own mistakes and crimes." The belief that "the real rulers of Russia today are the mafia" is as widespread among Russian soldiers as in society at large.

This is a clear difference from the Russian armies that conquered the Caucasus in the nineteenth century. No one ever accused the soldiers of the Russian imperial army of a failure to stand still and be shot at. One reason for this was obviously a mixture of blind serf obedience and fear of their own officers; another was the obvious willingness, shown by the casualty figures, of those officers to stand and die with their men. Those officers were recruited from the Russian elite, and whatever their other faults, were committed by personal conviction and family tradition to the Russian empire and Russian glory.

Today, as I heard again and again from Russian officers, with only minor variations, it is a case of, "We serve in the army because we're not trained for anything else. These days, who'd be an officer if you could work in a bank?" One of the most personally impressive and apparently highly-motivated Russian officers I met in Chechnya—the commander of a SOBR special police unit—confided to me that he was planning to leave the service to become a private security operative, as were several of his subordinates.

The ordinary soldier's and officer's contempt and loathing for "that brothel in the Kremlin" was extreme, open and, as far as I could tell, virtually universal. If the dominant cliché to be heard on the Chechen side is that "One Chechen is worth a hundred Russians", one frequently heard on the Russian side is: "A fish rots from the head." The "head" in this case means not just Yeltsin and his entourage, but also Defense Minister Pavel Grachev and to an extent the entire military hierarchy, riddled as it is with outrageous corruption and outright theft. These military attitudes may be of critical importance if in the weeks or years ahead the Yeltsin regime has to call on the army for support in a power struggle.

As to the Russian military command, it seems most unlikely after the Chechen experience that it will seek or agree to any more military adventures in the foreseeable future. The evidence—especially the complete lack of planning—suggests very strongly that it was not the generals who sought military intervention in Chechnya. Indeed, my information in August 1994—three months before the invasion—was that the General Staff, the commanders of the North Caucasus Military District, and Military Intelligence (GRU) were all advising strongly against it. This was essentially a politicians' war, if among the politicians we include Defense Minister Pavel Grachev, for whom personal political survival has long since become the overriding concern.

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[5]See also Michael Specter, "Strolling at Will, Chechen Rebels Mock Russian Army", *New York Times*, February 1, 1996.

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Old Fears and Current Realities

THIS REITERATION of Russian military weaknesses may strike some as redundant. After all, it has been the stuff of literally tens of thousands of reports by Western journalists on the ground. Yet as is so often the case, the message of the news pages has failed to get through to many of the op-ed writers, who still write as if a Russian army which has so utterly failed in Chechnya poses a major threat to Ukraine, the Baltic States, or even Central Europe; or could be made to do so in a few months or years.

For example, a supposedly "expert" briefing paper compares the position of the Baltic states today to that of South Korea in 1950—the argument being that if NATO does not give them an explicit security guarantee, Russia may take this as an invitation to attack, on the analogy of Dean Acheson's failure explicitly to include Seoul under the American security umbrella. Now, if pressed, no doubt the authors of this analysis would qualify their remarks and point out that there may be other means of pressure short of outright invasion—which is quite true.[6] Nonetheless, you don't have to be a deconstructionist literary critic to figure out that the mental image at the heart of the Korean parallel is that of hundreds of thousands of infantry pouring across the border, driven by a fanatical ideology and iron-willed leaders; cut down in their thousands, they continue to advance, charging with the bayonet, climbing over the bodies of their fallen comrades.

This is a powerful image, with deep roots in traditional Western fears of the Russians ("with snow on their boots") and the "East" in general. It is also grotesquely, fantastically far from the reality not just of the Russian army today but of any army that could conceivably be created on the basis of contemporary Russian society—unless Russia herself were to be invaded. On the basis of what I've seen over the past few years, I firmly believe that one Estonian volunteer fighting for his home and his homeland could see off ten or more unwilling Russian conscripts—and there are tens of thousands of volunteer militia in the Baltic States.

This is not the eighteenth century, and successful modern armies cannot be constructed on the lines of Catherine the Great's armies, of conscript masses driven into battle by fear of their own officers and NCOs. For one thing, highly educated technical specialists are far too important; for another, the ordinary soldiers fight not in large, easily controlled columns, but in small, dispersed groups. In these circumstances, men lacking a real will to fight will not advance into serious enemy fire. Why on earth should they?

The failure of many Western analysts to fully acknowledge Russian military weakness is due partly to a tendency among "military analysts" (too many of whom have never commanded troops or seen a battlefield) to add up numbers rather than to look at the human material and the human realities of combat; and partly to the currently fashionable emphasis in Western commentaries on the continuity of themes in Russian, Soviet, and post-Soviet history. Even in the hands of real experts, this emphasis is liable to beg as many questions as it answers. In the hands of non-experts or the simply bigoted, it becomes an excuse to indulge in shallow generalizations and to avoid any necessity of living in Russia, studying the real situation on the ground—or even for that matter learning the Russian language. While certain ideological patterns may have continued, Russian society today, especially among Russian youth, is very different from any that has previously existed on Russian soil. Above all, it is *profoundly unideological.* Western scholars may attach great importance to ideological traditions, but they are not high among the priorities of most Russian students, as Taylor Dark made clear in the last issue of *The National Interest.*

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[6]See "Baltic Security and NATO Enlargement", by Hans Binnendijk and Jeffrey Simon, Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University, no. 57, December 1995.

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From Hypocrisy to Cynicism

THE CONVICTION that their country is a great power and should behave as such is nonetheless probably eternally rooted in the Russian mind (as it is to a lesser, and less menacing, degree in that of the French, for example) and this will intermittently make Russia an uncomfortable presence. Russia will also do its best to maintain some form of sphere of influence over its immediate neighbors. The question is, however, what price would Russians be willing to pay for the restoration of great power status in the sense of a new territorial empire—and here the evidence is largely of a deep unreadiness for personal and national sacrifice, whether in lives or money. This has been apparent for years now, and can only have been strengthened by the bloody shambles of Chechnya. The great majority of Russians are "cheap hawks"; and whatever may be possible in Central Asia, Ukraine, and the Baltic States—in other words, the areas that matter most to the West—is not possible on the cheap.

It is important, therefore, not to take what either Russian politicians or ordinary people say too seriously. Not every American reader of *Soldier of Fortune* magazine would have made a good U.S. Marine on Tarawa; and not all the Russians who roar about how Ukraine is really part of Russia would be willing to go there to kill and perhaps die—or send their sons to do so—to back up their claims.

A very representative figure in Russia today is the woman who, after expressing a range of aggressively chauvinist opinions, admits that she would do anything to save her son from serving in the army, both because of the risk from the Chechens and, more importantly, because the army itself is such a notoriously brutal, brutalizing, and dangerous institution for its conscripts. An enterprise on the scale of the restoration of the Soviet Union would require a people with a steely sense of national solidarity and of commitment to national goals—and you do not find many such people in Russia today.

The gap between rhetoric and real feelings is greater in Russia than elsewhere, for obvious reasons. The whole Brezhnev era was one long education in the meaninglessness of public statements, as made by everybody from the general secretary to the humblest "citizen." Only such a past could have produced a figure like Vladimir Zhirinovsky, for whom public rhetoric is everything—but also exactly nothing. Even in his own mind, it probably has little connection to reality, and his ordinary followers vote for him not because of his "program", but because the noises he makes cheer them up. It is all in the strictest sense a political circus.[7]

It must also be stressed of course that Zhirinovsky's "party", with its grotesque greed, hypocrisy, and corruption, could not conceivably act as a base for restoring Russian economic strength, social morale, or military might—even if Zhirinovsky himself were really interested in taking power rather than in making money. Nor could any other party currently present in Russia provide such a basis. The Communists are essentially a party of nostalgia, with correspondingly high support among the elderly, and nostalgia for a past of security—economic, moral, and physical. With a few exceptions, the Communists are not a force for marching against the rest of the world "*bis alles in scherben fällt*" ("until everything falls to pieces"), as the Horst Wessel song had it. They don't have the fire in their bellies to carry out a new grand social and cultural transformation—and if they tried, the effort would soon collapse. And because the Russian armed forces share—often in exaggerated form—all the ills of Russian society, a general political and ideological transformation is also very unlikely to come from within the army itself.

To understand this, you have to listen to what Russian youths are saying in discos, cinemas, and workplaces. What most of them are definitely *not* expressing is a desire to go and die for the Motherland. Today, Russian youth culture is overwhelmingly non-militarist and

[7]For an excellent recent analysis of Zhirinovsky, see Nikolai Troitsky, "Mister Bluff", reprinted in *Prism* (The Jamestown Foundation, Washington, DC, March 25, 1996).

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indifferent or hostile to the idea of self-sacrifice and military discipline. The admired figures among Russian youth today are some version or other of the "New Russians"—bankers or mafia-type "businessmen", with their luxury cars, ostentatious lifestyle, and strings of "girlfriends." Poor old Captain Ivan Ivanovich doing his duty in Grozny simply doesn't get a look in. These attitudes are not simply the result of the transformations of the past few years; they were bred through the last three decades of Soviet life.

The lack of underlying militarism in a society as cynical and would-be materialist as that of Russia today should not be surprising. The Soviet Union was notoriously a society that, in theory at least, was in a state of permanent military semi-mobilization, both economic and ideological. When that state and its controlling ideology collapsed, society and culture swung ineluctably to the opposite extreme.[8] In the words of Igor Kon, "Under Soviet rule, Russia was the most hypocritical country in the world. Now, it is the most cynical." This effect was apparent, long before the Soviet Union fell, in the steadily diminishing psychological returns, especially among Russian youth, from the endless flow of patriotic material on the Second World War emitted by the state in the Brezhnev years, and from the extreme disillusionment resulting from the losses and futility of the Afghan War.

Soviet propaganda concerning the memory of the "Great Patriotic War" also contained its own central flaw from the point of view of maintaining a military spirit in society. The constant repetition of Russia's immense sacrifices and suffering in that war was intended to strengthen national pride; but "twenty million dead" is not a figure calculated to encourage a frivolous attitude to warfare. During the Afghan War, by contrast, the regime was careful to conceal the number of Soviet casualties.

Since the Soviet collapse, Russian television has contributed, partly unwittingly, to spreading fear and hatred of war. Concerning Chechnya, by the end of 1995 most Russian channels had become agencies of state propaganda in what they said: the fixed characterization of the Chechen forces as "bandit formations", the admiring interviews with Russian troops, and the reporting without comment of the most outrageously false official statements. But what they have been *showing* is different. Most Western TV stations, at least since Vietnam, have presented a relatively edited and sanitized visual version of war, and Western armed forces have tried to keep them as far as possible from the firing line. Not so Russian TV. Whether because of basic honesty, courage, sensationalism, or sheer brutish insensibility, it tends to show the unvarnished truth—and several years of looking at piles of brains, charred bodies, and severed limbs on the evening news about Karabakh, Tajikistan, Abkhazia, and finally Chechnya has not left Russian viewers with many romantic illusions about warfare. Chechnya therefore may be said to have provided a fresh argument to those Western journalists who argue that really forthright, even gruesome, coverage of war is in fact a force for peace.

The lack of military spirit in Russia and the Russian army today must also be seen in a general context of modernization—for Soviet rule *did* represent modernization of the old Russia, albeit of a peculiarly brutal, costly, and inefficient kind. One of the results of modernization of society all over the West in recent decades has been a decline in military values and commitment, and it is not easy to see why in principle Russia should be any different. Western armies have been able partially to sidestep this by moving from conscription to the creation of well-paid, highly motivated, professional armies, to some extent insulated from the cultural and ideological developments of society as a whole. In this way, the United States was able to purge and rehabilitate the demoralized, battered army that came reeling back from Vietnam (though it is of course far from clear how the U.S. Army today would fare in a really

[8]See his "Moral Culture" in Dmitri Shalin, ed., *Russian Culture at the Crossroads* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996).

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bloody war). The Russian army, however, does not have the money for such a vastly expensive transformation, and will not have it in the foreseeable future; and in any case, major wars for the recreation of the Soviet Union could not be won with small elite forces alone.

The Shrinking Pool

ONE ASPECT of the general demilitarization of attitudes in both East and West has been urbanization. Traditionally, most military experts have believed that peasants make better natural soldiers than urbanites, being more obedient, physically tougher, more accustomed to enduring the elements, and more used to blood and killing—if only of animals. The problem for modern armies is not simply that there are not enough peasants, but also that peasant societies tend to lack technically-educated cadres. Of course, assiduous training can make up for physical, moral, and educational weaknesses, but such training is extremely expensive. The Russian army still tries to conscript rural youths for combat units (as a Russian prisoner in Chechen hands said to me bitterly, "They think we're more ignorant, that we'll believe what they tell us and go where we're told"), but the pool is drying up as Russia's rural population gets smaller, older, more drunken, and physically decrepit. As for Russia's urban youth, some of them may think they're tough enough, but acting as enforcer for some mafia kinglet is not the same thing as spending weeks on end in a freezing trench under enemy fire.

In this sense, the Soviet military victory in the Second World War, which so mesmerized the West for decades afterwards, may be understood as the consequence of an unusually favorable combination of historical circumstances. A crippling weakness of the old Russian imperial army, with its illiterate peasant troops and dilettante officers, had been the lack of technically-educated personnel. By 1941, however, thanks both to the scale and the nature of the Soviet education drive, the Soviet army could mobilize huge numbers of technically-educated people, educated moreover very much in the appropriate technical fields; yet it could also still call on a mainly peasant population to provide the physically and emotionally tough cannon fodder, and a totalitarian state and party to provide the ideological and organizational backbone. The result was—briefly—one of the greatest armies the world has ever seen.

But another element was also necessary: that Russians by the end of 1941, as in 1812, were fighting on Russian soil, in desperate defense of Leningrad and Moscow. It is sometimes pointed out, as an example of rapid Russian military regeneration, that in 1939 the Soviet army was initially beaten by the tiny Finns, but went on barely two years later to crush the mighty Germans. This misses the whole point. If, today, NATO were to invade Russia and attack Moscow, then, after the usual confusion and slaughter, the end result would probably be the Russian battle-ensign flying over Paris and Berlin. But none of this is going to happen. □

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Gone to the Lake

Republicans and Foreign Policy

Jonathan Clarke

IN A JULY 1995 speech before an enraptured audience assembled at Washington's Center for Strategic and International Studies, House Speaker Newt Gingrich addressed the broad issues of post-Cold War U.S. foreign policy. His address was typically multi-layered and brimming with new age facilitator-speak phrases such as "appreciative understanding" and "complex decentralized system" that normally—and mercifully—find no place in the vocabulary of foreign affairs. In retrospect, however, one simple example of southern vernacular stood out. Trying to explain the vicissitudes of American diplomacy to the many puzzled foreign diplomats present, Gingrich said that when we Americans are not excited about the world, we "go to the lake."

The image in Gingrich's mind, no doubt, was that many southerners retire on summer weekends to their modest lakeside cottages to fish, hike, water-ski, and cook out. Once there, they refuse to be disturbed by telephone or fax communication with the outside world. They literally switch off. And indeed, as a matter of observable fact, American foreign policy does swing between energetic involvement and lethargic indifference. Countries formally at the forefront of American interest—El Salvador, Nicaragua, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Somalia—are given short shrift now that the American strategic focus has moved on. The Bosnians may face a similar fate once the 1996 presidential election is over.

Inadvertently, however, Gingrich was pointing to more than a general American inclination. He was identifying as well a particular tendency evident within his own party in this election year, a tendency that may deprive the Republicans of a heretofore standard advantage they have enjoyed in presidential electoral politics—the advantage of foreign policy. For while the party's presumed standard-bearer, Senator Robert Dole of Kansas, evidently sees foreign policy as a comparative advantage in the November polling, much of the rest of his party—especially in the House of Representatives—evinces little understanding or interest in the matter. To the extent that this is indeed the case it has serious implications both for the election itself, and in terms of what might happen down the road to a Dole administration searching for domestic and congressional support for an activist foreign policy.

The GOP Divide

DURING HIS SUCCESSFUL quest for the Republican nomination, Senator Dole repeatedly sought to distance himself from the more frivolous aspects of the electoral process by saying that it was about choosing someone to "preside over foreign policy." His stump speeches contained fre-

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quent references to the need to restore America's leadership, and most commentators believe that if the Republicans can make foreign policy an issue in November, it will work to their advantage.

At first sight it would appear that foreign affairs should indeed be a lucrative seam for the Republicans to mine. Although no one expects the election to turn on international issues, opinion surveys consistently report that voters are unhappy about the nation's standing in the post-Cold War world.[1] Certainly, it is difficult to defend the administration's performance in this field, and the best that can be said of its more recent actions is that, as one academic observer put it, the Clinton administration is now "awake in class." "Cold War-lite" is Senator Bill Bradley's dismissive assessment of the administration's performance, while Senator Phil Gramm scornfully characterizes its approach as "channel surfing." And to be sure, on the major issues of the day—especially on Russia and China, the two most significant—the administration still seems fumbling and incoherent. There is certainly no evidence that it has responded effectively to the challenge implicit in former Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke's insistence that the present is a seminal period in foreign policy. President Clinton's State of the Union message in January, for example, contained only a fleeting reference to international issues, wedged between lengthier sections on the environment and reinventing government.

The Republicans, therefore, have found easy pickings over the last three years in criticizing the administration's foreign policy stewardship. With some of its claimed successes—Bosnia, Northern Ireland, the Middle East—now looking vulnerable, they are likely to continue to do so. But this easy option has become something of a trap. As the Republicans press their claims to replace Clinton in office, merely pointing out the weaknesses of the incumbent's record is not going to be enough. They will also have to persuade voters that they can do substantially better, and this requires serious thinking at two levels. First, Republicans must develop a concept of America's place and role in the post-Cold War world that serves American interests, and that is consistent with the tenets of limited government and fiscal rigor implicit in modern Republicanism. Second, they must propose practical ways of making a new policy framework operational, particularly on those issues they themselves identify as being most central.

The evidence for progress on either of these fronts is threadbare. When informed that this study of his party's foreign policy was underway, one experienced Republican legislator commented, "Good luck, I hope you find it." On the conceptual side, the foreign policy contributions during the Republican primary debates rarely rose above the primitive and often sank to the ludicrous. Patrick Buchanan's proposal of a sort of neo-Berlin Wall (complete with recycled *Schiessautomaten*—automatic firing machines—no doubt) along the southern border of the United States was a disgrace. The mainstream candidates did not acquit themselves much better. Senator Richard Lugar, the Republican contender who most actively touted his foreign policy credentials, deliberately sought to inject a global aspect into his campaign but the result was not impressive. His bizarre and alarmist suggestion that the United States stood on the edge of a nuclear holocaust over the proliferation "crisis" met the derision it deserved. In the quest for primary votes even Senator Dole was prepared to trim his sails. He tempered his support for NAFTA, for example, a concept he had championed for nearly a decade and piloted through the Senate. And he reversed his long-standing opposition to moving the American embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

On specific foreign policy issues, the

[1] A full review of public opinion may be found in John E. Reilly, "The Public Mood at Mid-Decade", *Foreign Policy* (Spring 1995), pp. 76-93.

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quality of Republican thinking is lackluster. Whether on defense spending (more is better), China (gung-ho for Taiwan), Cuba (putting Dade County before the national interest), NATO (ready to die for Bratislava), Iran (an oxymoronic public advocacy of covert action), Mexico (keep them out), or international organizations (zero them out), Republican positions are, at best, distressingly lacking in nuance and, at their worst, conceptually unconvincing or impracticable. This weak performance in foreign affairs stands in sharp contrast to the Republicans' prodigious and creative production on domestic policy, where, at least until recent months, they seized the initiative and dominated the agenda. They achieved this by daring both to think new thoughts and to go back to unfashionable old ones—in both instances ruthlessly discarding current intellectual shibboleths. They now need to turn some of that intellectual energy loose on international issues. But will they?

One reason they might not has to do with the composition and attitudes of the Republican Congress. Despite their protestations of concern for the nation's international standing, Republican politicians, especially those elected in the 1994 mid-term elections, are neither experienced nor much interested in foreign policy. To take one striking example, at the time of his appointment as chairman of the vital Senate Subcommittee on East Asian Affairs, Craig Thomas (R-WY), had never been to China. For some of the newly elected representatives the mere fact of coming to Washington was, as a weary State Department official commented, itself a foreign experience.

In part, of course, this aversion to things foreign reflects the political ethos of the day. Douglas Bereuter (R-NE), who takes his important European and Asian duties seriously, has commented that his foreign travel attracts unfavorable comment from his opponents at every election. Nonetheless, this disdain for the non-American world represents a considerable break from the past—and a challenge to Dole. When Barry Goldwater, one of the heroes of modern Republicanism, wrote about his political creed in *The Conscience of a Conservative* (1960), he devoted a significant portion of the book to the world beyond America's shores. By contrast, the recent flood of books by and about the present generation of Republican leaders focuses fiercely on domestic issues and is almost devoid of any serious consideration of foreign affairs. The "Contract With America", for example, was dismayingly platitudinous on the subject.

Republican tracts rarely betray even a modest awareness that countries other than the United States exist, let alone that they might be valid models for comparison. Nowhere, for example, in House Majority Leader Richard Armey's book, *The Flat Tax*, is there any acknowledgment that, for all the Republican complaints about exorbitant taxation, by international standards the United States stands out as an oasis of low taxation—with Japan its only near rival. Nor does Armey mention the concept of a Value Added Tax (VAT) as a possible substitute for current U.S. practice, even though the VAT, used in dozens of countries as a tax on consumption rather than on savings, fits well the basic Republican fiscal philosophy.

The same exclusive focus on the domestic perspective holds true of Republican opinion-leaders. Even when, in such works as the Hudson Institute's 1995 publication *The New Promise of American Life*, conservative thinkers purposefully set out to provide an across-the-board conceptual manifesto for a new Republican era, they give short shrift to foreign affairs. The book's single chapter on America's international role appears at the very end, wearing all the shamefaced trappings of a hastily assembled afterthought, and has little editorial or conceptual connection with the central Republican themes of domestic regeneration and fiscal austerity that permeate the rest of the book.

The Republican political leadership deserves much of the blame for this state of affairs. Foreign policy specialists in academia and in Republican-inclined foundations (of whom there is an abundance and whose writ-

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ings are prolific) can only perform half the task. At the end of the day, the political leadership must decide the themes it is prepared to present and defend to the voters, and subsequently turn into policy. As Gingrich remarked succinctly in a speech to a CSIS colloquium in April, "If the country doesn't get it, you can't sustain it." Lugar's misbegotten attempts aside, this has not been happening. In April, Dole had to cancel a well-advertised speech on China, to be delivered at the Nixon Library in California, either because he could not make up his mind on the policy approach he favored, or because he feared dividing his followers while at the same time failing to distinguish his views sufficiently from those of President Clinton.

With the signal exception of Henry Kissinger's *Diplomacy*, books by former Republican secretaries of state and other high officials have tended to be somewhat anecdotal, backward-looking accounts of their time in office, rather than forward-looking discussions of the future needs of American foreign policy. All in all, it is not easy to find evidence that the Republican Party has used its time out of the White House to renew its thinking about international affairs.

Symptomatic of this resistance to renewal is the fact that the average age of the chairmen of the two key Senate foreign policy committees—Senator Jesse Helms of Foreign Relations and Strom Thurmond of Armed Services—is eighty-four. Neither exactly represents the cutting edge of the new Republicanism, and neither has much in the way of intellectual leadership to contribute to the task of shaping a foreign policy for a new era. Far from using his new position of power to introduce the fruits of a decade's worth of new thinking, Senator Helms seems concerned either to settle old scores or to push pet projects inherited from the time when expansionist communism was laying siege to the West. It is as though Helms and his colleagues had clicked the memory icon on some foreign policy computer screen and had then adopted as policy whatever the computer had provided from its 1970 and 1980 files. Even allowing for the Senate's seniority system, and with due respect for the virtues of experience, this does not convey either the image or the reality of a party seeking to rejuvenate itself. Rather, it personifies a party that, in Speaker Gingrich's words, has "gone to the lake."

* * * *

To provide specific illustration of some of the weaknesses of the Republican approach, let us briefly consider three major issues: Defense, European Security, and China. On the basis of an interesting new book, *Agenda for America: A Republican Direction for the Future*,[2] and judging by statements and occasional thinkpieces from their leadership, Republicans wish to lay particular emphasis on these issues.[3] Given their claim to superior foreign policy competence, then, it is reasonable to ask whether their emergent positions with respect to foreign policy are sound and based on a rational expectation of available resources. In short, will they work? The evidence is not encouraging.

Defense: The Militarization of Foreign Policy

GIVEN ITS underpinning role for foreign policy, it makes sense to start with defense spending. Since the Reagan presidency, belief in a high level of defense spending has become something of a litmus test for Republicans. This was not

[2]Haley Barbour, *Agenda for America: A Republican Direction for the Future* (Washington, DC: Regnery Press, 1996). As Barbour is the chairman of the Republican National Policy Forum and most of the top Republican leadership is listed as having contributed to this book, it can be treated as authoritative. Unlike other Republican tracts, it contains a detailed and serious section on foreign affairs.

[3]See, for example, Robert Dole, "Shaping America's Future", *Foreign Policy* (Spring 1995).

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always so. In his day—and that day was at the height of the Cold War—a Republican icon such as Eisenhower (whom Dole cites as an exemplar of sound Republican foreign policy) expressed serious reservations about the resource demands from the military. Today, however, such hesitations are taboo. Despite the demise of the Evil Empire on which the Reagan defense build-up was predicated, high defense spending has become an unexamined article of faith for Republican foreign policy—proof, in itself and without any need for further elaboration, of soundness and vision. On the primary trail, Dole returned repeatedly, but without much in the way of argument, to his theme that defense spending has been cut too far, too fast. He spoke of a "short sad interlude of American waffling and weakness." With appropriations for conventional diplomacy under increasing pressure, it is almost as though the Republicans are set on militarizing foreign policy.

At the political level, the implications in terms of practical numbers have usually been left unstated. It has been left to conservative defense specialists to fill in the blanks. In 1994 the Heritage Foundation proposed a five-year budget of $1.435 trillion, some $140 billion or 10 percent more than the budget favored by the Clinton administration. The defense section in the *Agenda for America* goes much further. In precise terms, this section (prepared under the co-direction of former Defense Secretary Dick Cheney and former UN Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick) reinforces Dole's charges that Clinton's defense cuts are producing the hollow army of the Carter era. To counter this, it proposes an increased expenditure of thirty billion dollars per annum on readiness, an additional sixty billion dollars annual spending for weapons procurement, an additional eighty billion dollars for a missile defense system (thereby violating the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty), together with unquantified extra spending on military pay and veterans benefits. In total, this implies an annual defense budget approaching $400 billion—an additional annual burden of $140 billion, or approximately 50 percent above current levels.

Defense spending is a very complex subject, the details of which cannot be afforded full justice in this space. It is fair to note, however, that some reputable experts (to which category both Cheney and Kirkpatrick manifestly belong) agree that expenditure of this magnitude is needed to maintain the credibility of the nation's present commitment to being able to fight two major regional wars more or less simultaneously. It is also reasonable to point out, as Gingrich has, that the aircraft carrier *USS Independence*, visited by Clinton during his April trip to Asia, is over forty years old.

The Republican focus on defense policy is therefore wholly legitimate. The difficulty is that they are putting forward two very different approaches. The 1994 Heritage Foundation outline amounts to a technical criticism of the Clinton defense budget. The proposal set out in the *Agenda for America* could be construed as accusing the administration of gross dereliction of duty by failing to provide the resources needed to defend the nation. It also brings with it enormous implications for the American political economy. In a six trillion dollar economy the problem is not one of an absolute inability to afford such sums for defense, but rather one of deciding the appropriate trade-offs in federal fiscal policy. Lopping back State Department appropriations or trimming foreign aid (Israel, Egypt, and Turkey are, of course, sacred cows) will not produce the necessary cash. Domestic priorities will have to be adjusted.

It is clearly awkward that the latest Republican proposal on the needs for defense spending differs so markedly from previous proposals (and, incidentally, from the military appropriations already passed by the Republican-controlled Congress). A more serious flaw, however, is the treatment of defense as a stand-alone entity, without any correlation to Republican objectives on budgetary matters.

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In its first chapter, the *Agenda for America* states that "we must keep in mind . . . tax limitation and spending control", and how often have Republican deficit hawks insisted that, "We have to get our fiscal house in order"? Yet here it is being proposed that the existing U.S. defense budget—which according to Lawrence Korb (an assistant secretary of defense in the Reagan administration) is already larger than those of all other industrialized countries combined—should be very substantially increased.[4]

The omission by the security experts of an acknowledgment of this aspect of modern Republicanism is a remarkable gap in coordination. With powerful movements in favor of a constitutionally mandated balanced budget and of requiring super-majorities for federal tax increases, proposals for major new spending cannot be justified unless accompanied by an absolutely compelling case in terms of purpose and national interest. In the absence of such a case, the Republican criticisms of Clinton on defense are likely to have as their main effect the exposure of the party's internal divisions. Instead of being the Republicans' strong suit, it could turn out to be an albatross.

European Security and NATO Expansion

GIVEN THAT THE United States has fought two hot wars and one cold war in Europe in this century, and that active-duty American engagement in Europe endures to his day, the development of a workable policy toward European security is of first-rank importance. Despite faddish attempts by the Clinton administration to criticize past American foreign policy as excessively Eurocentric, a combination of history, alliances, and interests ensures that no American administration can afford to neglect Europe.

The issue at the heart of European security is policy toward Russia, encapsulated by the question of NATO expansion. The Clinton administration favors NATO expansion but, faced by the constraints of the real world, has dithered. In the words of conservative columnist William Safire, it has kicked the can down the road. The *Agenda for America*, on the other hand, has no such doubts. It rejects the Partnership for Peace as an empty framework and asserts boldly that the United States should support NATO membership for the newly democratic nations in Eastern Europe.

With developments in Russia having disappointed initially optimistic expectations, the need for serious thinking about how best to sustain democratic gains in Central and Eastern Europe is indeed more urgent than ever. NATO expansion, which Republicans have consistently favored, is clearly one option for counterbalancing Russian irredentism or neo-Soviet ambitions. But it is an option that can only be considered seriously if its full implications are spelled out in advance and are accepted by the American people. An extension of NATO's Article V guarantees to the four Visegrad countries (Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia) is not simply a paper exercise, nor can it be created by administrative fiat. These guarantees would commit the United States to defend these countries against any external attack. In a very obvious way, they would bring the Western defense perimeter significantly closer to Moscow and the ethnic cauldron of Central and Eastern Europe.

Given the extraordinary difficulties experienced by leaders of both parties in justifying the troop deployment to Bosnia—even Republicans like Dole, who had argued most strongly for American involvement as a concept did not find it easy to support it as a reality—the basis for congressional and wider public support for NATO expansion looks fragile. Unless this basis can be significantly strengthened, the danger is that any extension of NATO will be an irresponsible sham, a security system that exists only as a pious declaration. There is an unfortunate precedent in Europe for treaty signatories to take on obligations that they had no intention of honoring. In 1925 the Locarno Treaty committed the British and French to

[4]See *The Cato Handbook for Congress* (Washington, DC, 1995), p. 101.

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defend the Polish corridor around Danzig, a task that the British General Staff immediately declared to be impossible.

In this regard, the traditional Republican emphasis on workability and competence becomes both welcome and crucial. Two questions are critical:

1. A more expansive defense doctrine implies a greater willingness to engage American military forces overseas. Bearing in mind the historical Republican stress on the need for a strictly interest-defined (rather than ideals-defined) foreign policy, what precisely is the American interest in Eastern Europe for which American soldiers might be asked to die?

2. Extra defense commitments normally generate extra demands for equipment and personnel. Are Republicans ready to ensure that these extra resources are available? If so, how will they do this within a balanced budget?

As yet, the answers to these questions have been either unavailable or dismayingly thin, both from the administration and from aspiring Republicans. To show that they are serious about this issue, and not merely engaging in facile posturing, Republicans need to prove that they have thought through the implications of the extra commitments they are willing upon the nation.

China: Time for a Major Policy Shift?

FINALLY THERE IS CHINA, relations with which may well be the dominant international issue of the next century. There are many scenarios for China's future. According to World Bank projections, by 2020 the United States and China together will have economies larger than those of Japan, Germany, India, Brazil, Mexico, and eight other major countries combined. If the United States and China can form a satisfactory *modus vivendi*, this will provide a remarkable platform on which global prosperity can be built. But the converse is also true. Any sharp deterioration in relations between the two countries will have enormous negative consequences. Unfortunately, there are multiple reasons—Taiwan, human rights, Tibet, nuclear and missile proliferation, and trade infractions among them—why the relationship will probably not be a smooth one. It is unlikely, too, that the Chinese will go out of their way to make things easy for those who seek friendly accommodation, for, as the China scholar Orville Schell observes, "they are playing to win."

For Republicans, the China issue is difficult. Those with specialist knowledge like Henry Kissinger and Douglas Paal, the former National Security Council director for Asia in the Bush administration and a current Dole adviser, have no difficulty advocating a nonconfrontational policy of balance, caution, and restraint. They have been less successful, however, in restraining their Republican colleagues—Gingrich and Helms in particular—from actions that point in the opposite direction. When, apropos the independence of Taiwan, Gingrich blithely suggested in July 1995 that the United States should get this behind us, he was quickly hauled back into line by Kissinger. Gingrich's more recent attitudes, for example toward MFN renewal, have been much more circumspect. On the other hand, in a series of private foundation meetings, Senator Helms has pulled no punches in advocating that Taiwan's President Lee Teng-hui be invited to make an official visit to Washington and that Taiwanese independence be recognized. This idea, along with a number of other proposals designed to be unacceptable to China, were included in the State Department appropriations bill vetoed by President Clinton in April.

Since 1949, China has been a highly-charged issue for Republicans and the temptation to play politics over it is deep-seated and understandable. During the 1992 campaign Clinton criticized Bush for coddling the Chinese leadership, but in office his own approach has been highly inconsistent, at once blustering and conciliatory, and it has been an easy target for Republican critics. If, however, they wish to be perceived as more reliable practitioners on China, Republicans

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will need to be sure that they themselves have a coherent operational alternative.

As of now, the Republicans have still to dispel the sense that they are as confused as everyone else on this issue. When Dole finally delivered his much-delayed speech on China policy in mid-May, one of his advisers described it as "a straddle." As a long-term goal, the self-determination of a democratic Taiwan is perfectly consistent with Republican and wider American ideals. Putting this into practice is a very different—and much more hazardous—affair. Insofar as it addresses the issue, the *Agenda for America* tries to have it both ways. It states that a one-China policy has been followed by ten consecutive administrations and lays out a goal of a free, democratic, and market-oriented unified China. At the same time it says that the United States should support Taiwan's efforts to win formal UN representation. Conspicuously absent from this analysis is any mention of how the United States should react if China does not find this acceptable, as it certainly will not. The March crisis in the Taiwan Strait found the Republican leadership, including Dole, in a belligerent mood, demanding an end to the administration's policy of ambiguity about the American willingness to protect Taiwan from invasion. But that raises, and leaves unanswered, the question: Should the ambiguity be removed and all made crystal clear, where then would the Republican leaders themselves stand on the issue?

What, in other words, is the Republican end-game with respect to China? On the basis of support for Taiwan or on any other ground, are they now prepared to reject the Nixonian approach of engagement (an approach, it should be remembered, that was adopted when the Beijing regime was vastly more repressive than it is today) in favor of containment or confrontation? This is one plausible interpretation of Dole's May speech. There may be excellent reason for making such a change—or there may not. But in any case, it would constitute a huge shift both for the United States and East Asia generally, one that would need to be made with all due seriousness. The Clinton administration made the mistake of talking tough when it was apparent that it had not thought through how it would react if the Chinese too were tough. This has severely diminished American influence with the Chinese. If the Republicans are not to make the same mistake, they too need to think through whether they can turn tough talk into action—and how doing so would fit into the overall scheme of American interests.

Building a New Foundation

THE REPUBLICAN approaches to all three of these strategic issues share a common flaw. It is not that their policies are self-evidently without merit, but that Republicans fail to come clean about their huge practical implications. These include an exponential increase in defense spending, new and risky commitments in Eastern Europe, and the reversal of a China policy that has endured since the Eisenhower administration. To put any one of these policies into effect would require a major restructuring of the nation's budget and foreign policy orientation. To do all three would imply a remarkable reordering of national priorities.

If such a radical reordering is truly needed, all well and good: Let the Republican leadership make the case publicly and let it make these changes a central part of the GOP platform. But a program of this magnitude cannot be put into effect without party unity and in the absence of public support—and neither one of these conditions exists at present. By evading their responsibilities in these respects, the Republicans give the impression of lacking serious purpose. Put another way, they are falling into the same trap as the Clinton administration: talking a big game without putting their money where their mouth is and without being willing to put capable players on the field.

Below the strategic level the Republican

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performance has also been uneven. Over Bosnia, for example, the leadership has alternated from a hands-off policy under Bush to demands for active American leadership under Clinton. At the point when Republicans were asked to back these demands up with real votes, however, they balked. The December 1995 Senate debate revealed deep Republican hesitation about any foreign policy commitment beyond heaving munitions out of high-performance aircraft. The final Senate resolution was a bizarre split between supporting the American troops in Bosnia and refusing to endorse Clinton's decision to send them there.

On Cuba, the Republicans allowed themselves to be manipulated by Castro, on one hand, and hard-liners within the Cuban-American community, on the other, into passing the Helms-Burton amendment tightening the economic embargo. The chief result of this is likely to be the embroiling of the United States in litigation with allies like Canada. In the meantime, Castro has once again won exactly the anti-Yanqui excuse he needed to crack down on the burgeoning human rights movement represented by the Consilio Cubano. As Senator Jeff Bingaman (D-NM) commented, Castro "retains a hypnotic ability to induce stupidity in Yankee policy-makers." Helms was not deterred. "Adios, Fidel", he intoned as the legislation passed, and one day, of course, he will be right. But whether Helms or Representative Robert Torricelli—who made the same claim in 1992 when introducing a forerunner of the Helms-Burton legislation—will deserve the credit, is another matter.

All this means that, in presenting his foreign policy, candidate Dole cannot rely on a stable foundation of ready-for-government policies. He has to build that foundation, and he has to build one for which President Dole—should he win—can muster majority political support. Part of this task can be accomplished in the specialist discussion groups that are already meeting all over Washington. But, as the *Agenda for America* recognizes, a set of distinctively Republican ideas, based on clear objectives flowing from principles shared by the American people, is also needed. Devising these may not be easy, and not just because Republicans are divided among themselves. Another problem is that Republicans, like Dole, who favor an active American role abroad often find it difficult to distinguish their views from similarly minded Democrats. Consider, for example, the following pairs of phrases, and decide in each case which emanates from the Republicans and which from the Democrats:

1. The United States must once again be prepared to exercise leadership across the full spectrum of international relations.
2. American leadership is our first principle and a central lesson of this century.

3. American foreign policy must continue to combine the protection of American interests and the promotion of American values.
4. The United States has a remarkable opportunity to help shape a world conducive to American interests and values.

5. Our fundamental requirement is a strong, competent, and effective military.
6. Our military is the best-equipped, best-trained, and best-prepared fighting force in the world.

Turning to issues of specific policy the same exercise may be conducted:

1. NATO remains crucial to American interests and to the execution of U.S. policy in Europe.
2. The NATO alliance will remain the anchor of American engagement in Europe and the linchpin of transatlantic security.

3. Countries such as North Korea, Iran, Iraq, and Libya are rogue regimes. [This] makes them a direct threat to the United States and its allies.
4. Rogue states such as Iraq, Iran, and Libya still threaten their neighbors, important U.S. allies, and vital American interests.

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5. We must continue to lead the world in reducing barriers to free trade.
6. America can only flourish in a world where trade is rising and barriers falling.

In both groups the odd-numbered statements emanate either from Dole's "Shaping America's Future" in the Spring 1995 *Foreign Policy*, or from Haley Barbour's *Agenda for America*; the even-numbered statements are from Secretary of State Warren Christopher's article "America's Leadership, America's Opportunity" that directly preceded Dole's in the same issue of *Foreign Policy*.

The convergence is remarkable. In a less politically charged atmosphere, the degree of bipartisan agreement over national security policy goals might even be considered healthy. After all—in sharp distinction to domestic issues—both Republicans and Democrats agree that the United States has enduring or core interests overseas that transcend day-to-day partisanship in Washington, and in his CSIS speech, quoted earlier, Gingrich reiterated the long-standing and venerable proposition that the process of rethinking America's mission in the world should be conducted on a bipartisan basis. In April he spoke of the need for a "genuinely American policy." Whether today's militant Republicans really accept this proposition in theory, it is how things are turning out in practice. Whereas on the domestic front the Republican advocacy of limited government, personal responsibility, and budgetary constraint differentiates them sharply from traditional Democratic positions, on foreign affairs their leadership, if not all of the rank-and-file, remains attached to the established liberal consensus of big, activist government. Anyone who questions this approach and seeks to advocate a more selective one is derided as an isolationist. The Republicans would be well advised to ban this tired cliché from their lexicon. For one of the perverse consequences of this tendency to imagine that foreign policy can be neatly compartmentalized as either full-blown internationalism or know-nothing isolationism, without any middle ground, is to choke off fresh Republican thinking. And that—fresh thinking—is precisely what is needed.

Competence or Vision?

THE TASK FACING DOLE, therefore, comes back to the much debated and often derided concept of "vision." Republicans like Gingrich, who has spoken of a need for a "new vision of the world, of the American people and America's role", readily acknowledge this. With the presidential nomination secure, Dole too has begun to talk about vision, and now that he is freed of the shackles of his senatorial responsibilities, he may be yet more inclined to think in terms of ideals. But by temperament and inclination he appears uncomfortable doing so. He has instead tended to emphasize his strengths as "a doer, not a talker", and has specifically rejected any attempt to reinvent foreign policy for the post-Cold War era.

There are many in political life who believe that vision and foreign policy do not mix. They stand by the words of the late British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan: "I am a politician; if you want a vision, consult the Archbishop of Canterbury." They argue that an excessive concern with such dreamy notions as vision complicate the search for an operationally practical foreign policy. Dole appears to share this view. He has explicitly faulted both Bush's notion of a New World Order and the Clinton administration's Enlargement of Democracy as foreign policy rationales. Eschewing high rhetoric, Dole concludes that the secret of a successful foreign policy is to "put America's interests first and lead the way."

There is precedent for such an approach. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. once pointed out that U.S. foreign policy comes in two personalities: the first asks, "Is this right or wrong?"; the second asks, "Does it work?" On present showing, the Republicans seem destined to present themselves as the latter type. While

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this may work as foreign policy, it may not work nearly as well for purposes of electoral politics. For its effect is to leave the Republicans close to Michael Dukakis' ill-fated insistence in the 1988 presidential election that the issue was competence rather than any grand design. It seems that the question of whether this approach will work better in 1996 seems about to be tested. If the intervening 1992 campaign is any guide, the Republican reluctance to address the need for an overall vision may not be risk-free. Then, Clinton was able to strike a chord with the American people when he said that the fundamental concern of foreign policy was not the "cynical calculus of pure power politics" but "What are our values?" He put the Bush administration under pressure to explain itself, and invoking *raison d'état* proved inadequate for most Americans. It may be in 1996 as it was in 1992.

Ready for Government?

THERE IS STILL TIME for the Republican leadership to develop a defining (and responsible) foreign policy difference between themselves and the Democrats, but a basic and major problem stands in the way. Much of the Republican leadership, it would appear, wants to do more and spend more than the Democrats; but much of the Republican rank-and-file wants to spend the same or less and do less than the Democrats—at least in places like Bosnia, Somalia, and Haiti. How do Senator Dole and the foreign policy experts assembled by Haley Barbour "define a difference" under such circumstances, it being understood that if the party wins it will then have to govern?

One way to manage this problem is to fix on issues that avoid the main division among Republicans. Barbour seems to be feeling his way in this direction when he states that, unlike Clinton, the Republicans will pay attention to foreign policy in its own right, not simply when driven there by domestic political pressures. By insisting that he will be guided by national interests rather than ill-judged humanitarian (or environmental) crusades, Dole too is seeking to draw a fine ideological line between himself and Clinton. These ideas still beg some important questions. Given the high level of public skepticism about overseas activity, the case for greater foreign policy emphasis will have to be exceptionally persuasive. Furthermore, Dole's assertion that he will be guided by the national interest does little to explain what his foreign policy will actually be in practice. Many people believe that the term "national interest" is self-defining. It is not. Over Bosnia, acrimonious disagreement developed over exactly this point of whether the national interest was involved. Nonetheless, by talking about the centrality of national interest and about the need to elevate foreign policy above day-to-day politicking, Dole and Barbour are on the right track.

Whether the divided Republicans can go beyond these tentative beginnings remains to be seen. There are certainly plenty of ideas in circulation, but they do not all run in the same direction.[5] In the classic geopolitical sphere, the Republicans could emphasize their traditional mastery of the balance between American values and American power. Alternatively, they could apply their driving domestic themes to foreign policy: fiscal rigor means greater selectivity; devolution means a strengthening of regional systems; personal responsibility means more allied burden-sharing. These may sound ethereal, but they can be turned into powerful agents of change—for example, in laying the groundwork for a North Asian collective security system.

These are strong Republican themes that resonate over a broad spectrum of

[5]A succinct analysis of some of the conflicting themes of Republican thinking may be found in Peter Rodman's *America Adrift: A Strategic Assessment* (Washington, DC: Nixon Center for Peace and Freedom, 1996).

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domestic opinion. In the right hands, they could be fashioned into a winning foreign policy message. If they are to have any hope of accomplishing this, however, Republicans will have to move beyond the calcified nostrums of the Cold War and give serious thought to America's true needs in the modern world. Otherwise they will be open to the same criticisms they now make of the Clinton administration:

•Regarding foreign policy as a secondary, part-time pursuit capable of being handled in the time left over from more important priorities.

•Failing to integrate the domestic and international facets of their policy.

•Paying too little attention to the domestic political viability and sustainability of foreign policy.

•Failing to match resources to aspirations, ends to means.

If the Republicans cannot or will not repair these weaknesses, it will be reasonable for voters to conclude that, as far as foreign policy is concerned, there is no compelling reason for them to change their 1992 choice. If they do not repair these weaknesses and they nevertheless win the election, it will leave their foreign policy looking very much like that of the Democrats. Improvisation and reactivity will continue their dismal duty as the watchwords of the nation's approach to the rest of the world. Is that the best we should expect? □

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Decision Time

Britain and Europe

Max Beloff

EARLIER THIS YEAR, events provided a fitting commentary on the mixture of tragedy and farce that has been the history of the ill-starred attempt to create a European super-state. When the "Intergovernmental Conference" (IGC) convened at Turin on March 29, 1996, to revise the Treaty of Maastricht with a view to expanding the membership of the European Union, the main topic turned out to be "mad cow disease" (BSE) and its alleged link to Creutzfeld-Jacob disease (CJD).

A panic had spread across Europe after an apparent acceptance by the British government that such a link might exist and, in consequence, a decision was taken by the European Commission that Britain should not only be prohibited from exporting beef to Europe, but to anywhere else in the world. The assembled ministers were described by the British prime minister on his return as having agreed that the problem was a "European" one, and as having received a "notable measure of understanding and support." During the next few days, however, Britain's European partners demanded ever more stringent measures to destroy British cattle and refused to set a date for lifting the ban. Even the promise to bear part of the cost of the operation was shown to be less significant than at first thought—since the money would be recovered by cutting down on the British rebate of its dues to the Union, negotiated by Lady Thatcher to make up for the fact that the method by which the Community (later the Union) was financed was particularly ill-suited to Britain's circumstances.

As weeks passed, the beef problem continued to push other European issues off center stage, and the result was to bring over to the Euroskeptic camp several Members of Parliament (MPs) not hitherto so situated. The matter came to a dramatic impasse when, on May 20, Britain's European partners refused to ease the ban—this in the context of a recent visit of German Chancellor Helmut Kohl to London. The next day, responding to public and parliamentary pressures—and perhaps his own good sense as well—Prime Minister John Major took the diplomatic offensive, declaring that Britain would invoke the unanimity rule of the European Union to block all EU activities, including that of the Intergovernmental Conference and, if necessary, its ministerial summit set for June 21 in Florence. Thus through the improbable agency of bovine business has Britain come to its moment of truth about Europe.

No one should have been surprised at the attitude of Britain's "partners." Agricultural protectionism is part and parcel both of the Union's commitment and of the individual policies of its dominant governments—those of France and Germany. For the French especially, finding ways of stopping meat imports from Britain had long figured as an objective of their powerful agricul-

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tural interest. Concern about "health" has often been an excuse for blatant protectionism in the past, and so it is again. The fact that cases of CJD had occurred in a number of European countries, with no evidence of a connection with "British beef" or beef of any kind, renders transparent the true motive of the "ban."

The "mad cow" syndrome was not the only element of farce at Turin. The chairman of the meeting—Italy held the presidency of the Union for the first six months of this year—was the foreign minister of Italy, Signora Agnelli. (Since the show was held on the property of her family firm—the makers of Fiat cars—the whole thing, as with so much in Italy, looked like a family matter: the more so in that the Italian government was a caretaker administration pending a general election.) All this did not preclude Agnelli giving interviews which showed that her command of the English language was much superior to her understanding of politics. She proclaimed: the need to go forward to create a federal system for Europe; her certainty that Britain would in the end go along with such a project; that a single European currency would come into being at the beginning of 1999 as the Maastricht Treaty had specified; and that Italy would be part of the new system—though none of the figures pointed to Italy being likely to meet the strict financial criteria laid down in the Treaty. The two countries in Europe keenest on surrendering their sovereignty to the Franco-German partnership, which is the serious factor in the situation, are Italy and Belgium, the two countries with the greatest difficulty in running their own affairs.

One element of farce was largely set aside; after a brief discussion on "employment and competitiveness", the issue was postponed to the next summit at Florence in June. Since what most worries ordinary citizens on the continent, including those in Germany and France, is the rising level of unemployment, and since both governments are pledged to maintain the heavy burden of non-wage costs that handicap their manufacturing and service sectors, it is hard to know what can usefully be said at Florence. No doubt an attempt will be made to end Britain's opt-out from the "social chapter" of Maastricht, so that British costs can be forced upwards and Britain's competitive advantage diminished. And if the beef wars continue until then, Britain, no doubt, will respond with a self-interested vigor uncharacteristic of recent years.

The Meaning of the Euro

IN A SENSE all this is beside the point. The real issues are not those in the IGC agenda but those raised in what are described as parallel negotiations, negotiations looking to the elimination of national currencies in favor of a single "Euro", controlled by a single European bank.

Since the impact of EMU—economic and monetary union involving the creation of a single currency—would be far greater than any changes that might be made in the operations of the European institutions, any discussion of European issues that fails to address the question is nugatory. As a Portuguese member of parliament has put it, "to debate Europe's future without discussing EMU is like studying the Middle Ages while ignoring the plague."[1]

True, it is still possible to find dedicated ignoramuses—like the British chancellor of the exchequer, Kenneth Clarke—who profess to believe that the issue is purely an economic one, to be settled by each individual country on the reckoning of the balance between the economic advantages and disadvantages involved in entering such a system. But no one who is serious about the thing and who looks at either experience or the inherent logic of such a system can fail to see that to surrender control over one's currency is to abrogate national sovereignty in a vital area. Quoting Chancellor Kohl's belief that the forging of a United States of Europe is the true objective of EMU, the former chancellor of the exchequer, Lord Lawson, writes:

> Although this may be the purpose of the principal proponents of EMU, are they right in believing that monetary union and political union must

[1]Paulo Portas in *The European Journal* (March 1996), p. 18.

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stand or fall together? I believe they are; and it is interesting to note that the institution that has probably given the most rigorous thought to this issue over several decades, the Bundesbank, has long been convinced that the two are inextricable.

It would mean a single control of monetary matters and rates of interest, as now practiced by national banks, and a "binding coordination" of fiscal policy. This "fiscal federalism" would, in Lord Lawson's view, "require full-blown, democratically-based, political union."[2] As he points out, given the likelihood that over a large area differences in economic conditions are certain to arise, what is done by the central authorities may not suit all parts of the Union to an equal measure. In classic federations, for instance the United States, there is a corrective in the form of labor mobility. For a variety of obvious reasons such mobility does not exist in the European Union, nor is it likely to exist in the future. So the only recourse would be to transfer payments such as those already embodied in the existing treaties. Why else would the Republic of Ireland be so passionately devoted to the European idea? But any increase in such transfers to meet the requirement of sustaining support for a single currency would not please the principal paymasters. Hence in part the reticence of much German opinion, this in spite of the chancellor's enthusiasm.

Even if all the existing fifteen members of the Union could be brought within the EMU, what about the "enlargement" that is supposed to be at the heart of the IGC? We know that the hopes of the Central and East European countries that have pressed for membership have been frustrated by the obstacles placed in the way of their trade, reflecting the protectionist instincts of most of the existing members. Can one seriously believe that the inhabitants of Bavaria are going to pay heavier taxes so as to give Slovakia equally good public services? It has been hard enough for them to swallow the burden of "unification" with the GDR.

Britain's Response

EVEN WITHIN the countries of the existing Union the need to meet the Maastricht criteria has involved heavy doses of deflation that have already produced obvious social strains. While objections to Britain's involvement in the federalist drive have largely come from the Right in domestic politics, on the single currency issue there are also grave misgivings on the Left. Tony Blair may reiterate his determination that under his leadership the country would never "be isolated or left behind in Europe."[3] But if not being "left behind" means becoming part of EMU, he has yet to convince his party colleagues. The impact upon Britain's economy of trying to comply with the Maastricht criteria was highlighted in a leaflet, issued at the end of March 1996, sponsored by fifty named Labour Members of Parliament: "Stuck with mass unemployment and deflationary economics, the 'Euro' would be the breaking of Europe, not its binding." Such utterances may give pause to those in Germany and elsewhere who believe that if the IGC and EMU negotiations can be prolonged beyond the next general election, Labour will be in power and Britain eager to go along with the Kohl vision.

Since where governments and central banks are concerned the negotiations that matter go on behind closed doors, it is hard to predict the outcome. As of late May 1996, the most probable outcome on the single currency issue looks to be an EMU restricted to Germany, France, the Benelux countries, and perhaps Austria. But this raises the possibility of the "core countries" being undercut by the countries left outside. We may therefore expect pressure on the remaining members of the Union to enter a new exchange rate mechanism that would enable the core countries to control the exchange rates of all the members, in which case the degree of sovereignty left them would not be much greater than if they had become part of the EMU itself.

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[2]Nigel Lawson, "Does EMU Require Political Union To Work?", *European Business Review*, vol. 96, no. 6, 1995.

[3]Speech at Blackpool, October 4, 1994.

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Given the ruthless determination of Chancellor Kohl to bring about a federal Europe through the monetary route, we may expect the pressure to take disagreeable forms, even to threatening non-exchange rate mechanism (ERM) countries with exclusion from the benefits of the single market. For someone who, at Louvain of all places, has threatened Europe with a renewal of its internecine wars if he does not get his way, no form of pressure can be ruled out.[4] Kohl's visit to London in late April did nothing to allay such concerns.

Since there is now in Britain an increasing awareness of the consequences of accepting EMU membership, there has been much talk of seeking not only parliamentary assent for it but even popular approval through a referendum. Neither party leader has been willing to make an unqualified commitment to the idea. Mr. Blair has seemingly committed himself to seek popular approval either through a referendum or a general election. Since divisions on the subject exist in both main parties, and since no general election campaign can be made to focus upon a single issue, the second alternative is a non-starter. So one presumes that a Labour government would call for a referendum, although the party's intentions remain obscure.

Where the prime minister, John Major, is concerned it is known that he had to overcome a strong opposition to a referendum in the cabinet, led by Kenneth Clarke. How far the opposition was genuinely based on the expressed claim that referenda were alien to the British constitution—hardly more alien, one would think, than taking the country into a federal system—and how far on the knowledge derived from all tests of opinion that the single currency would be repudiated by the electorate if given the chance, it is hard to say. What emerged just as Parliament was rising for the Easter recess was a compromise. The government would first itself accede to EMU, then pass the appropriate legislation through Parliament, and then put the *fait accompli* to the voters. Unlike the case when the referendum on remaining in the Community was held in 1975, cabinet ministers who dissent from the policy would be barred from campaigning against it. In other words, the scales would be weighted as far as possible on the side of a yes vote. It seems a high price for keeping Kenneth Clarke in the cabinet, but it is not out of line with precedent. For although dissident Labour ministers were allowed to campaign in 1975, all the weight of the official machine and of the establishment in general was mustered, both publicly and in more devious ways, to see that the vote came out as Harold Wilson desired—not a glorious episode in British constitutional history.[5]

This background must be borne in mind when we consider the British reaction to the issues that are properly the concern of the IGC. Here the general stance of the government would have wide cross-party support:

> We are committed to the success of the European Union, and to playing a positive role in achieving that success. We are confident that it can be achieved if the EU develops as a Union of nations cooperating together under Treaties freely entered into and approved by the national Parliaments of every Member State; a Union which respects cultural and political diversity; which concentrates single-mindedly only on what needs to be done at a European level, and doing it well; which does not interfere where it is not needed; and which is outward-looking, free-trading, democratic and flexible. We shall not accept harmonization for its own sake, or further European integration which is driven by ideology rather than the prospect of practical benefit.[6]

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[4]See "Kohl on Fire" and "Dousing Kohl" in *The National Interest* (Spring 1996), pp. 106-7.

[5]I have given details of this event in *Britain and European Union: Dialogue of the Deaf*, to be published this summer in London by Macmillan Press. It has been suggested that an additional motive for agreeing to a referendum was anxiety lest the "Referendum Party" of Sir James Goldsmith—a sort of British Ross Perot—cost the Conservatives some marginal seats.

[6]*A Partnership of Nations: The British Approach to the European Union Intergovernmental Conference 1996*, White Paper, Cm 3181, March 1996.

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Resistance to the extension of majority voting, and the detailed proposals which are then outlined—the curbing of the powers of the European Court and of the pretensions of the European Parliament; proposals in the fields of justice and home affairs, citizenship and human rights; budgetary policy; the common fisheries policy from which Britain has been a particular sufferer; and finally foreign and defense policy—all fit neatly into this general framework. Why then the worry?[7] The essential point is that the general idea of a "partnership of nations", which can only mean a partnership of nation-states, is wholly at variance with what a majority of the other members of the IGC appear to desire.

If one had to produce an alternative "white paper" setting out the views of the Franco-German alliance and its associates, it would read something like this:

> We are committed to the success of the European Union and its speedy transformation into a federally organized United States of Europe in which all substantial powers shall be exercised by the Union's own institutions—Commission, Court, and Parliament. In so far as national governments retain a voice, they shall always be obliged to defer to the voice of the majority. Since no federal system can tolerate independent foreign policies on the part of the units of which it is composed or separate armed forces, we shall ensure that foreign policy decisions are taken by majority agreement and that the Union, by taking over the Western European Union and severing its link with NATO, shall become fully responsible for Europe's defense. The Anglo-Saxon heresies of free trade and deregulation shall be abandoned and economic policy be dominated by determination to protect Europe's producers and their right to maintain their existing levels of social provision, whatever the competition from low-cost economies overseas.

In the light of such differences over goals, not merely methods, it is clear why the British government could not be over-optimistic concerning its ability to make headway at the IGC. It was already clear from experience that even where Britain achieved exceptions or "opt-outs", the Union would find ways of getting round them, for instance by classifying measures in the economic field—such as the minimum wage and hours at work—as health provisions, and so susceptible of enactment by qualified majority voting. Given a court that regarded its task not as that of interpreting the intentions of legislators but of pushing forward the process of integration, everything was stacked against the British government's hopes for a "partnership of nations."

What has worried the more realistic of commentators is that the government has seemed so oblivious to this fact, and so ready to believe that compromise is possible. "We must", declared the White Paper,

> be realistic therefore about the changes we can hope to achieve, just as we are clear about the sort of changes we will not accept. If we were to press ideas that stand no chance of general acceptance, some others would seek to impose an integrationist agenda which would be equally unacceptable from our point of view.

Such a perspective has been wholly inappropriate. Since the most important countries with which Britain would be dealing (as Signora Agnelli was to make plain at Turin) were committed to pressing on with integration even at the expense of enlargement, it would not matter what proposals Britain put forward. None of them would fit in with the integrationist goal. Since, as the White Paper pointed out, the Treaties could only be amended by unanimous agreement, Britain could in the end always use its veto. In that case, there seems to be on the continent some confidence that it was only necessary to wait for the British general election to put the Labour Party into power, when Britain

[7]For a critique of the document see Bill Cash, MP, *The Blue Paper*. A Response to the Government's *White Paper* (London: The European Foundation, March 20, 1996).

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would accept the whole integrationist agenda. Whether Mr. Blair and his colleagues would in the end prove as malleable as the continental governments expect is unknown. But one can understand why continental governments take the view they do.

The Third Pillar

PERHAPS THE MOST important area of difference is over defense and foreign policy, the so-called "third pillar" of the Maastricht Treaty. Nothing contentious that has happened in the world since Maastricht has found the countries of the European Union following identical policies. Each country has followed what was thought to be its national interest. The integrationists have drawn from this the lesson that the way to overcome these differences and give "Europe" its proper weight in the world is to bring foreign policy into the general structure of the Union; that is to say, decide on what should be done by majority vote. From this conclusion even the most Europhilic of serious British politicians has felt bound to dissent. Coordination remains desirable and Britain is prepared to see some new European official appointed to facilitate the process and perhaps act as a spokesman for all, *where agreement had been reached.* But that is a very different matter from having agreement forced against the grain of Britain's national interest.

Defense is an even more vital question from the point of view of national independence. Britain remains convinced that the security of Europe, even after the end of the Cold War, still rests on a close association with North America. The WEU, the only wholly European organ for military cooperation, listed some four years ago a number of tasks for itself: "crisis management, combat operations, peacekeeping tasks, including embargo or sanctions enforcement and humanitarian and rescue missions which European governments might be prepared to undertake without U.S. or Canadian participation." And these conclusions were accepted at Maastricht. But action independent of the United States was never envisaged on the bigger issues. As far as Britain was concerned, its then foreign secretary, Douglas Hurd—no Europskeptic—noted:

> We did not see the European Union itself as playing a direct or immediate part in defense. This is partly because some member states including Britain wanted to emphasize even more emphatically in defense than in foreign policy that defense was a matter for cooperation between governments. It was not to be subordinated to supranational institutions. It was partly because the European Union now included states which have never been members of NATO, and which even in 1996 value something which they used to call neutrality, that is a position outside defense alliances.[8]

Perhaps Mr. Hurd is still too much of a diplomat to add that Germany, the leading protagonist of a European Union defense component, has so far, as in the former Yugoslavia, advocated policies for which Britain, France, and other countries have risked troops while the Germans themselves, on the plea of constitutional or psychological impediments, are careful to keep their forces out of harm's way.

None of this means that European countries do not have to face together the need to bring some Central and East European countries within the NATO protection zone while developing joint policies toward Russia to allay its insecurities. But even here there are troubling signs of countries, notably Germany, developing "special relationships" while preaching European solidarity.

Europe Without Europeans

IN THE HALF-CENTURY in which I have been following European events, I have constantly marveled at the ease with which Americans have swallowed the arguments of the integrationists and the difficulty they

[8]Douglas Hurd, "The IISS Alistair Buchan Memorial Lecture" delivered in London, March 28, 1996.

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have in understanding why Europeans cannot solve their problems by the tried American expedient of federalism.[9] Yet this assessment, which has been of practical significance, rests upon a misunderstanding of both American and European history. Whatever view one may take of the American Founding Fathers and their work, it is clear that what made the United States of America possible was the existence of a self-conscious American nation, fostered by common origins and two centuries of experience within a single imperial system. With the partial exception of Texas and the territories annexed from Mexico and later Alaska and Hawaii, U.S. expansion to its current dimensions was made possible by an identity of language, culture, and basic legal institutions. For similar reasons federalism was possible for the British possessions in Canada and Australia, although in the case of Canada the development of a feeling of separate nationhood in Quebec now threatens the original achievement.

The obstacle to a "United States of Europe" is that there are no Europeans in the same sense that there were Americans, Canadians, and Australians when those federations were formed. Enacting a common citizenship and issuing identical looking passports does not get one all that far. Europe is still composed of nations and its history over the last half century is the history of their relationships with each other. The drive to set up common institutions as the basis for a federal system was the outcome of particular calculations by particular countries as to where their best interests lay. The idea that Europe has enjoyed an unusually long period of peace because of the setting up of institutional structures is an absurdity too often repeated. The sufferings entailed by the Second World War were enough to inoculate the peoples against a repetition. The only threat to European peace has been from the east, and what prevented it from ending in war was the power and good sense of the United States.

The decisive moment where the process of integration was concerned was the decision by the French elites that they could do better by accepting a permanent partnership with Germany—as Vichy had attempted during the war—in the hope that their greater intelligence and experience would always be able to keep Germany under control despite its greater population and bigger resources. German unification shook that confidence but did not destroy it. And British hopes that a "Gaullist" president in the person of Jacques Chirac would bring about a change in policy have proved hollow; particularly unsettling, for example, was Chirac's insistence during his May 1996 trip to London that Britain join the EMU—just as opposition to the idea was waxing on the English side of the Channel. The European Union as now envisaged would be based upon a Franco-German alliance dedicated to creating something very like the Napoleonic "continental system", familiar to students of the presidencies of Jefferson and Madison. Of such a system Britain cannot now, any more than then, form part. If pressed to do so at the IGC or elsewhere, it will have no option but to find a way of escaping altogether from the system created by the Treaty of Rome and its successors. As de Gaulle foresaw, it will prefer the "open sea" at whatever temporary economic cost.

As to what will happen on the continent itself, no one can be certain. What Napoleon's rule did was to exacerbate national feeling in every country to which it extended. It is likely that, far from assisting in a permanent reconciliation between former enemies, the European Union may exacerbate xenophobia. Certainly Chancellor Kohl's bullying tactics have set back the better Anglo-German relations that were developing in the postwar period. The social costs of EMU in France are clearly awakening old resentments against Germany. And the list could be prolonged. The nation-state may be an anachronism to some, but it has a long life ahead of it yet. France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and other countries will still be there when the activities of the Brussels bureaucracy have been consigned to the archives. □

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[9]See, for example, Max Beloff, *The United States and the Unity of Europe* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1963).

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Strategy Creep in the Balkans

Up To Our Knees and Advancing

Ted Galen Carpenter and Amos Perlmutter

PRESIDENT CLINTON contends that the Bosnian conflict lies at the heart of Europe and threatens to destabilize the entire continent. He has said that "the conflict in Bosnia is the most dangerous threat to European security since the end of the Second World War", and that "there is the very real risk that it could spread beyond Bosnia, and involve Europe's new democracies as well as our NATO allies."[1] This argument misconstrues both geography and history. Bosnia and the rest of the Balkans are Europe's hangnail, not its heart. Developments there may be disgusting and tragic, but they have meager potential to disrupt even the European, much less the global, strategic environment. Indeed, Britain's ambassador to the United States, John Kerr, has conceded that "the war in Bosnia could rumble on for years without directly impinging on the security of Western Europe."[2] President Clinton notwithstanding, the Balkans have little potential to roil post-Cold War Europe—unless, that is, the United States and the major European powers choose to make it once again an arena for great power rivalries.

The dismaying fact is that U.S. policy is proceeding in a direction that is likely to have that effect. In a haphazard fashion, we are moving toward making that volatile region a zone of extensive U.S. influence—perhaps ultimately a virtual American protectorate—with the goal of containing Serb power. We are developing an ever more extensive network of political and military relationships with Belgrade's neighbors. Begun as no more than a provident effort to prevent the Balkan War from spreading—at a time when it was assumed that there would be no major dispatch of U.S. combat troops to the Balkans—this policy has since acquired a momentum and a logic of its own now that tens of thousands of U.S.-led NATO troops are there.

While America has long had significant interests in Western Europe, never before has a U.S. administration argued that the country has such interests anywhere in Eastern Europe. But now the Clinton administration, inspired by the forceful advocacy of Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke before he left office in February 1996, has put in motion a new and far-reaching policy that envisions an arc of alliances to contain Serbia, the most powerful Balkan state. That course has far reaching and potentially dangerous ramifications. The Balkan region has served as an arena for peripheral but still vicious imperial conflict since the days of Rome and Byzantium. It has been a battleground between Europe and Asia,

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[1]White House Press Office, Letter from President Clinton to Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, November 13, 1995, p. 1.

[2]Quoted in Stephen Chapman, "Will Bosnia Save NATO—or Destroy It?", *Chicago Tribune*, November 23, 1995, p. A27.

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Christianity and Islam, Habsburgs and Romanovs, as well as hostile indigenous groups. There is scant evidence that the local situation is likely to improve in the coming decades. Indeed, the complex rivalries that produced carnage in Bosnia may constitute a foretaste of what lies in store elsewhere in the Balkans. Extended rivalry, between the United States and Russia, could return as well.

Blurring Objectives in Bosnia

WASHINGTON'S anti-Serb containment policy has been evolving since 1992, even before Holbrooke's time. The Clinton administration followed its predecessor's decision to recognize the newly minted country of Bosnia-Herzegovina, supporting the Muslim-dominated government and openly opposing the secessionist campaign of the Bosnian Serbs. The United States placed more than five hundred troops in Macedonia at this time, as part of a UN peacekeeping operation to keep the Bosnian conflict from spreading and to thwart any designs that Belgrade might have on its southern neighbor. Washington also played a crucial role in training and equipping the Croatian army—a force that was subsequently to engage in a ferocious ethnic cleansing campaign against Serbs in both the Krajina region of Croatia and in northwestern Bosnia.

The Clinton administration's Serb containment policy now shows signs of escalating further. Washington is pushing U.S.-designed military training programs for Croatia, Hungary, Romania, Macedonia, and Albania. U.S. forces have also conducted joint military exercises with most of those countries. All except Croatia are already avid participants in NATO's "Partnership for Peace" program (PFP), thereby gaining extensive military contacts with the United States. (Zagreb is lobbying for inclusion at the earliest possible date.) Hungary, Romania, and Albania are also among the most eager applicants for full NATO membership, which they see as a vehicle for securing reliable U.S. protection. It is notable that Hungarian president Árpád Göncz has offered as one argument for his country's membership in NATO that it "would ensure NATO an access route to the Balkans, which despite the peace process currently under way, can be expected to continue as a region of instability in the future."[3] Göncz later told Hungarian reporters that Hungary's participation in NATO's Bosnian peacekeeping mission "far surpasses the original goal of the Partnership for Peace program, and it now implies an actual and genuine peace-creating partnership."[4]

It is Bosnia, of course, that has become the centerpiece of Washington's Balkan policy. Secretary of Defense William Perry has indicated that American "civilian contractors"—the same instrumentality used to equip and train the Croats—will soon be training Bosnian Muslim military units. Turkey, a NATO ally, will apparently be in charge of arming those forces, with other Islamic countries (most likely Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states) financing the enterprise. The CIA has also moved into Bosnia, under the guise of guaranteeing the safe deployment of U.S. forces, so that no Somalia-style incidents occur. A CIA role in Bosnia expands the presence already established in the post-Cold War Balkans, including extensive ties with the governments of Albania and Macedonia.

The administration has also been edging—slowly and reluctantly, but edging all the same—toward full-scale "nation-building" in Bosnia. The Dayton Accord stipulates that:

> reconstruction of the infrastructure and the functioning of transportation and other facilities are important for the economic resurgence of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and for the smooth functioning of its institutions and the organizations involved in implementation of the peace settlement.

That provision suggests that there is little intellectual separation between the U.S.-directed

[3]"Rebirth, Return, Reunion: Hungary's Euro-Atlantic Agenda." Heritage Foundation Lecture 544, October 26, 1995, p. 4.

[4]News File, Embassy of the Republic of Hungary, January 17, 1996, p. 2.

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military deployment and the "civilian" missions assigned to the European Union. The blurring of those objectives does not bode well for the early exit strategy officially outlined by the Clinton administration.

Former Swedish Prime Minister Carl Bildt has been placed in charge of nation building, but his organization is glaringly deficient in both personnel and resources. He will be forced to depend on American participation in case of emergency—especially for transportation, electrical power, bridge construction, and temporary housing. Since the Europeans demur from extensive non-military activities, the burden might eventually be shouldered by the United States. We are already seeing early indications of that trend with the burgeoning activities of the Agency for International Development. (The AID, facing possible elimination by Congress, has a vested interest in doing its utmost to demonstrate its usefulness in Bosnia.) Bildt has also called on the NATO Implementation Force (IFOR) to assist the civilian reconstruction mission, and military units have already begun to undertake such tasks, starting with transport and communications assistance.

The Dayton agreement also emphasizes the importance of "free, fair, and democratic elections." It is unclear how such an ambitious goal—literally creating the complex political structures of a bifurcated yet theoretically unified Bosnia—can be undertaken within the supposedly limited mandate of IFOR.

The nation-building agenda belies the notion that the Dayton Accord is merely a troop-separation, peacekeeping agreement. In fact, the United States has been extensively involved in the broader missions from the beginning. Bosnia's new constitution was largely drafted by the U.S. State Department in the weeks leading up to the signing of the Dayton agreement. That level of involvement again contradicts the announced U.S. exit strategy. Will the United States really be willing to withdraw its forces before the Bosnian constitution has been implemented and the country's political institutions are functioning? Certainly, few knowledgeable people believe that that withdrawal will occur in accordance with the twelve-month timetable the administration has established.

Indeed, the facts on the ground hardly inspire confidence that even the facade of a unified Bosnia can be maintained during that period. The mass exodus of Serbs from Sarajevo is merely one indication that the goal of a multi-ethnic Bosnia is a chimera. Continuing friction in the Muslim-Croat Federation (which is not likely to dissipate, despite yet another agreement in April pledging cooperation) is another. The most probable outcome is a three-way partition, with the Serbs becoming part of a greater Serbia, the Croats joining a greater Croatia, and the Muslims ruling a rump Bosnia. A March 1996 U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency report provided a gloomy assessment, concluding that Bosnia is fragmenting, and that without a massive developmental aid program, a complete collapse of the peace initiative is almost certain once NATO-IFOR withdraws.

Since it appears that civic action and nation-building are beyond both the financial capability and will power of the United States and the European Union, doubts arise about another important object of Washington's Bosnia policy: that of strengthening the Bosnian military. Much of the official American optimism in this regard is based on the assumption that the Bosnian Muslim army will be able to defend itself at the end of a year. That will entail a considerable training effort, and, again, the United States appears to be heavily involved. "West Point and the U.S. Air Force Academy", reports the *Washington Post*, "are accepting applications from Bosnian officers this year. *Other* [emphasis ours] defensive ties are expected to increase as well."[5] It is not clear what the Pentagon means by "other" ties, but as any student of history and politics knows well, the formation of an army is central to the

[5]John Pomfret, "U.S. Builds Arc of Alliances to Contain Serbia's Power", *Washington Post*, December 19, 1995, p. A1.

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effective functioning of a state. Moreover, one does not build a capable army without supporting political institutions and structures. In short, taken seriously, strengthening the Bosnian military will involve a comprehensive nation-building effort.

The charge of "mission creep" thus misses the essential point; what we have here is better termed "strategy creep." We are witnessing the construction of an ambitious Balkan strategy by stealth. But that keystone of Washington's policy appears to be crumbling even before the regional structure is built, which raises the question of how wise and competent a strategy it is.

The Kosovo Connection

THERE ARE HINTS that the administration may even see Serbia's restive, predominantly Albanian-populated province of Kosovo as a component of America's new Balkan policy. Although U.S. officials still insist that they merely favor greater autonomy for the Kosovars, rather than independence, various statements and actions suggest a more ambivalent position. Secretary of State Warren Christopher has defined an "outer wall" of economic sanctions that will be maintained against Belgrade until the Kosovo crisis is "resolved" in some unspecified way. The United States has also twice warned Belgrade not to use force in the province. With unusual bluntness, a December 1992 letter from President George Bush to Serbian President Slobodan Milošević declared that, "In the event of conflict in Kosovo caused by Serbian action, the United States will be prepared to employ military force against the Serbians in Kosovo and in Serbia proper."[6] (Note the implication that Kosovo is not part of "Serbia proper.")

President Clinton issued a similar warning in March 1993, and a senior administration official admitted that the dispatch of U.S. troops to Kosovo was seriously considered in May 1993, when troops were sent to Macedonia, although the option was ultimately rejected as too dangerous. Ibrahim Rugova, president of the self-proclaimed Republic of Kosovo, visited Washington in November 1995 and announced plans to open a diplomatic office. A few weeks later, Holbrooke stated that the U.S. government would "try to establish in the very near future a United States official presence in the capital of Kosovo."[7] Such actions suggest something more than routine American interest in the province of another country.

A Policy Without a Name

HOLBROOKE HAS BEEN the only high administration official thus far to express a rationale for the deepening U.S. involvement in the Balkans, stating that "we have got to make the Balkans safe from Serbia." He quickly followed that blunt justification with the more conciliatory comment that "the Balkans should also be made safe for Serbia."[8] The former goal would be difficult enough, but adding the latter goal multiplies the potential problems. The notion of a stable, peaceful Balkan peninsula defies a daunting historical record. It is certainly an implausible objective without a massive, ongoing U.S. political and military presence.

There is little doubt that a network of U.S. military and intelligence ties throughout the Balkans is developing clandestinely, but such a potentially intrusive U.S. role has not undergone public and congressional scrutiny. If a "Clinton Doctrine" for the Balkans is emerging, the American people and their representatives deserve to be told as much, and given a chance to ask some hard questions. Why, for example, should Serbia—a landlocked, poor state with no ability to threaten the United States or even the major European powers—be

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[6]Quoted in John M. Goshko, "Bush Threatens 'Military Force' If Serbs Attack Ethnic Albanians", *Washington Post*, December 29, 1992, p. A10.

[7]James Morrison, "Onward to Kosovo", *Washington Times*, January 10, 1996, p. A11.

[8]Quoted in Pomfret, "U.S. Builds Arc of Alliances to Contain Serbia's Power", p. A6.

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the target of a policy (containment) that was originally conceived to thwart the global expansionist ambitions of a totalitarian superpower? What tangible benefits does Washington anticipate from defending Serbia's neighbors—including the quasi-fascist regime in Romania, the neocommunist governments of Hungary and Albania, and unstable, fratricidal Bosnia? And perhaps most important, given the frustrations experienced by earlier, more proximate, great powers (most notably the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires) in their attempts to stabilize the Balkans, why assume that Washington's bid to play the role of stabilizer will fare better? Although the Ottomans were initially successful, they had to put forth an enormous, sustained effort, and even then their hegemony slowly unraveled. At least the Ottomans (and to a lesser extent, the Austrians) could plausibly justify their commitment on the basis of proximity and other elements of an interest-based policy. The United States lacks that justification and has failed to advance any other.

It is an overstatement, in our view, to describe the proposed arc of alliances as a coherent policy or strategy.[9] Furthermore, no major European country has endorsed, or is likely to endorse, such an ill-conceived venture. (Washington's NATO allies, for example, are notably unenthusiastic about plans to arm the Bosnian government forces.) An anti-Serb containment policy does not even make sense as a search for an alternative mission for NATO, since it has not been defined as an official alliance policy. (Although a few prominent individuals, including former Secretary of State James Baker, have proposed that NATO's new mission should be to guard the independence of Macedonia and otherwise promote Balkan stability.)[10] A containment strategy in the Balkans cannot be a surrogate for the eastward expansion of NATO, since it has no relevance to the security of Poland, the Czech Republic, or other Central and East European countries.

Nor does it address the crucial question of Russia's intentions. Boris Yeltsin's purge of reformers in his government following the strong showing of communist and ultra-nationalist candidates in the December 1995 Duma elections—most conspicuously the replacement of Andrei Kozyrev with hardliner Yevgeny Primakov as foreign minister—raises legitimate concerns about the possible re-ignition of Russian imperialism. If the worst-case becomes a reality, does the United States intend to undertake dangerous security commitments on two fronts—the Balkans and Central Europe, two regions replete with ethnic frictions?

Indeed, the administration's Balkans strategy might well stimulate rather than deter a new Russian imperial role in Southeastern Europe. As the target of a U.S.-directed encirclement strategy, Serbia would have little choice but to turn to Russia for protection, and Moscow would be under considerable domestic pressure to respond favorably to overtures from Belgrade. Russians and Serbs have ethnic and religious ties going back many generations, and the Yeltsin government has already been assailed by its political opponents for betraying Serb interests. Should things proceed in that direction, the Balkans would once again have become an arena for great-power rivalries, with all the dangers that implies. As in other parts of the world, America could easily find itself in danger of being dragged into conflicts by client states pursuing their own particular agendas—a case of Balkan tails wagging the American dog.

Perhaps worst of all, the United States could find itself attempting to harmonize the interests of clients that dislike one another almost as much as they dislike the Serbs. The delicate balancing that would be involved in such a venture is already evident in Bosnia. Not only does Washington face the difficult task of preventing renewed fighting between the Muslims and Serbs; but it must also exert every effort to hold together the fragile Muslim-Croat Federation—something that is very hard to do.

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[9]As with Jacob Heilbrunn and Michael Lind, "The Third American Empire", *New York Times*, January 2, 1996, p. A15.

[10]James A. Baker III, "Drawing the Line at Macedonia", *Los Angeles Times*, May 2, 1995, p. 2.

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And if that is not enough of a challenge, there is the matter of Croatia's barely disguised desire to annex the predominantly Croat portions of Bosnia.

The Macedonian Axis

WASHINGTON IS almost certain to encounter similar problems in its mission to protect Macedonia's independence and territorial integrity. Serbia is by no means the only—or even the principal—menace to Macedonia. Relations between the republic and several of its other neighbors are tense and confrontational. Bulgaria, which earlier in this century went to war on three separate occasions to press its territorial claims to Macedonia, has recognized the independence of the new republic with great reluctance and continues to insist that Macedonians are merely "western Bulgarians." Greece has waged a virtual cold war against Macedonia because the new state appropriated the name "Macedonia" and chose the sixteen-point "Vergina Sun" pattern—a symbol of Hellenic culture dating from the time of Philip of Macedon—for its flag. Athens has also worried that Macedonia has designs on the Greek province of the same name, a concern fanned by the inflammatory rhetoric and extravagant territorial ambitions of a small but vocal "Greater Macedonia" movement in the new republic. For more than two years, Greece refused to extend diplomatic recognition to Macedonia and even imposed an economic embargo on its landlocked northern neighbor.

An agreement brokered by Holbrooke in September 1995—yet another example of Washington's growing role in the Balkans—appears to have resolved some of the disputes between Greece and Macedonia. The government in Skopje agreed to modify Macedonia's flag and to amend the constitution to remove passages that implied any claims on Greek territory. In exchange, Athens agreed to recognize its neighbor as a sovereign state and to lift the trade embargo. Other thorny issues, including Macedonia's name, were not resolved and animosity between the two capitals remains high.

Albania's attitude is the most worrisome of all, since that country appears to covet Macedonia's heavily Albanian western provinces. (Indeed, maps circulated by a "Greater Albania" movement lay claim not only to most of Macedonia but to large portions of Greek Epirus as well.) Tirana has offered none-too-subtle encouragement to Albanian separatist political forces. When moderates left the leading Albanian party in Macedonia, the Party of Democratic Prosperity, in February 1994, Albania's president, Sali Berisha, immediately formed close ties with the new radical leadership. He has also responded favorably to statements by Albanian Macedonian leaders, such as Mahi Nesimi, that Albania "must aggressively support the interests of Albanians in Kosovo, Macedonia, and elsewhere in the region."[11] The Macedonian government contends that it has foiled at least one armed secessionist campaign directed by Albania.

It is symptomatic of the multiple sources of threats to Macedonia that so many parties were rumored to be involved in the October 3, 1995, assassination attempt against president Kiro Gligorov—a car-bomb attack that left Gligorov gravely wounded. In addition to the disgruntled Albanian minority in Macedonia, suspicion fell on strident Macedonian nationalists (who considered Gligorov "soft" on both Albania and Greece) as well as the Serbian, Greek, Albanian, and Bulgarian intelligence services. Responsibility has yet to be established, but the assessment of one European diplomat familiar with the Balkans is especially worrisome. He described the assassination attempt as "very professional" and concluded that the bombers almost certainly had been trained outside Macedonia.[12]

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[11] Quoted in Edward Mortimer, "Southern Discomfort", *Financial Times*, March 3, 1994, p. 13.

[12] Raymond Bonner, "Macedonia Names Fill-In for Wounded Leader", *New York Times*, October 5, 1995, p. A14.

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Given the multitude of potential pitfalls, the Clinton administration will have a difficult time making the case for a U.S.-orchestrated containment policy in the Balkans. America's significant strategic and economic interests center around the major powers of Western Europe and, increasingly, East Asia. There is little need to become deeply committed to a geopolitical backwater like the Balkans, and there is even less wisdom in doing so.

At the very least, if the administration wishes to pursue a containment policy against Serbia, it ought to do so openly, not in a clandestine manner. If stabilizing the Balkans is to be NATO's new mission, or even if it is merely a solo U.S. venture, the president has an obligation to do what Harry Truman did for the original containment doctrine: seek public support and congressional approval. He also has an obligation to explain why the Balkans are so important that America must risk a considerable investment in blood and treasure. □

Drifting To The Top

I heard it for the first time in Belgrade: "Kosovo is the Jerusalem of the Balkans." We heard that in the headquarters of the Serbian Renewal Movement and from the lips of writer Vuk Draskovic, the leader of the largest Serbian opposition party. "Serbia is everyplace where there are Serbian trenches, or Serbian graves", he says. So from this point of view, Kosovo, the home of two million Albanians, 90 percent of the population, is indisputably a part of Serbia.

The diplomats in their tree-shaded villas in the Uzicka district say the region is explosive. The Albanians in Kosovo, the southern tip of the rump Serbian republic, want their independence and should not be underestimated. And in addition to the 3.4 million Albanians in Albania itself, there are Albanians in Montenegro and Macedonia. Bulgaria and Greece are not disinterested observers. If things break loose, the whole region could explode. "The Albanian question is slowly drifting to the top of the agenda", says a West European diplomat. "By the beginning of the twenty-first century, it will be number one."

—Theo Sommer, *Die Zeit*, February 9, 1996

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The Man Who Changed the Game Plan

Richard V. Allen

I AM GOING to talk about how Ronald Reagan and his team—a team widely characterized at the time, both here and abroad, as a group of inexperienced and impractical right-wing ideologues and fanatics—prevailed in the Cold War.[1] In doing so, I shall not be so foolish as to claim for them all the credit for victory. Clearly, much belongs to earlier American statesmen, from Harry Truman on; and one cannot deny a little to Mikhail Gorbachev, however unintended the consequences of his actions. But I shall offer what I believe is a reasoned defense of the proposition that the Reagan presidency can properly claim the lion's share of the credit—and, even more shocking for some, that the key factor in the winning side's team was the president himself.

Some of Reagan's critics still cannot understand how America and the world survived the eight years of his two administrations. After all, how could an aging actor, so untutored in the finer ways of thinking, so divisive and so right-wing in outlook, so unfamiliar with life inside the Beltway, be expected to tiptoe through (and a preference for tiptoeing was the very mark of sophistication for such critics) the nuanced strategic and diplomatic world of the 1980s? How could he run the world with his absurd 4x6 cue cards and a TelePrompTer?

Now it is true, President Reagan did initially take us into a confrontation with the Soviet Union. But he did so intentionally, deliberately, and in slow motion. Moving to confront the adversary in this way, Reagan followed a plan that he had thought through over many years. There were, of course, major glitches, detours, and reversals, but he never changed his basic outlook...and he did understand the importance of keeping it simple.

The fact that Reagan was prepared to use confrontation in this way is what has given credence to the view that, far from ending the Cold War, he actually prolonged and deepened it. There is a considerable body of revisionist history on this subject, including the work of our present deputy secretary of state, Mr. Strobe Talbott, the architect of the present administration's policy toward Russia and its former empire. One cannot help feeling that had Mr. Talbott been around in 1946, when Winston Churchill delivered his famous "Iron Curtain" speech at Fulton, he would have enthusiastically joined the many who accused Churchill of being a "warmonger."[2]

When Churchill made that speech, we

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[1]This essay is adapted from a talk given at the Metropolitan Club, Washington, DC, on October 3, 1995.

[2]For a sampling of such accusations, see Spencer Warren, "Churchill's Realism: Reflections on the Fulton Speech", *The National Interest* (Winter 1995/96), pp. 42-4.

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were busily demobilizing and withdrawing from Europe while Stalin stayed there, which meant that the United States was put in the position of reacting to Soviet advances in the postwar period, rather than seizing the initiative. It was only slowly and after much provocation—when, one after another, the Eastern European countries were taken over by a combination of highly effective internal subversion and external Soviet military pressure, and the Red Army did not budge from the eastern part of Germany—that the United States decided to react in earnest. When it did so, a long-term strategic plan began to take shape.

Now, on any given day in this club you may see Paul Nitze lunching in this room. The next time you see him, remember that he was the principal drafter of the 1950 document known as NSC-68. Signed by President Truman forty-five years ago, this landmark paper originated the policy of containment of the USSR. *How* we moved to contain the Soviet Union in various ways was a matter for successive presidents to decide, but this doctrine of containment remained essentially in place for the next forty or so years under both Republican and Democratic administrations.

In my view, however, the stage had been set for a deviation from containment and an eventual showdown with the Soviets—the showdown that was to come with Reagan in the 1980s—as long ago as the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962. While we breathed a collective sigh of relief in the wake of that crisis, two trends of great importance were set in motion by it. The first was the clear realization on the part of Nikita Khrushchev that, in October 1962, the Soviet Union was decidedly inferior to the United States in terms of military power. He vowed that it would not remain so, and embarked on the largest military buildup in history. We underestimated and misread this trend—badly.

The second trend was that the Chinese moved into an open and bitter dispute with the Soviets. I believe we badly misread the implications of this trend as well, for we concluded that the so-called responsible and sober Soviets were to be contrasted with the reckless and revolutionary Chinese, who were busy promoting "wars of national liberation" in the Third World and generally undermining U.S. interests. Of course, in reality it was the Soviets who were reckless, embarking upon a huge military buildup and themselves fomenting revolutionary strife in the less-developed world; while the Chinese talked a good game of revolution, but were in reality sober and careful not to extend themselves beyond their borders.

What was to occur later in the Nixon-Ford years is surely the subject of another discussion. Let me simply note that when détente became a policy, rather than merely a descriptive statement and a generalized hope, it amounted to little more—or less—than a reaffirmation of containment. Leading practitioners of détente (and especially Henry Kissinger) seemed to believe that the United States could never entertain a notion of "winning" the Cold War, and should instead seek the best arrangement possible under less than ideal circumstances. In fact, some believed that the Soviets were actually winning and that this necessitated a deal.

In 1976, you will recall, Ronald Reagan's primary campaign caught fire when he unleashed a powerful assault on the policy of détente, and the battle became so intense that Gerald Ford nearly lost the nomination at the Kansas City convention. So heated did things become that Henry Kissinger almost did not go to the convention, and when he did, it was to be booed by many of the delegates and to be met by a Republican platform that contained a repudiation of "détente" as the centerpiece of U.S. policy toward the USSR. (That platform document never saw the light of day; it was quietly deep-sixed by the Ford administration in its losing re-election campaign.)

Even in 1976, and for as long as I knew him, Ronald Reagan rejected the doctrine of "containment." This is not to say that he repudiated or demeaned its achievements, but that he believed deeply in its inadequacy if we were ever to be secure in the modern world. He believed in developing momentum through strength, and applying that momentum to the

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Cold War equation. He knew that it would entail risk, but in his view a worthwhile and manageable risk, one that stopped short of outright provocation or war in order to achieve victory. He believed that a quantum change in East-West relations was necessary: no more passivity, no more reacting to Soviet initiatives, as we were clearly doing in the Carter years in Central America, Angola, and Afghanistan. He believed, simply, that democracy and freedom, resolutely asserted and eloquently articulated, could ultimately prevail.

Thus Reagan entered office in early 1981 with a clear strategy in mind. And that strategy, developed over the several years preceding his election, was, if we may use classic Soviet terminology, to change "the correlation of forces" in the world.

Reagan's program for dealing realistically with the Soviet Union was essentially a matter of getting the U.S. economy in shape, forging ahead with a comprehensive domestic program, strengthening America's defense capabilities through a sustained program of re-armament using modern and advanced technologies, and changing dramatically the way in which the country's foreign policy was conducted. There were those who said that Reagan "didn't have a clue" about how to conduct a coherent foreign policy. But he actually had more than a clue; he had a plan, and the resolution to put it into effect.

The major shift in U.S. policy was made formal in late 1982 and early 1983, through the adoption of NSDD-75, still today a secret document. The United States would no longer be content merely to shape and influence Soviet behavior, but would set out to change the Soviet system itself, and literally "roll back" Soviet advances and conquests outside its borders. The objective was to find weak points in the Soviet structure, to aggravate the weaknesses, and to undermine the system. This represented a sea change in U.S. policy.

A defense buildup would take a long time, Reagan knew, and it would be necessary to mobilize broad support for one. This he achieved by mid-year 1981, making choices for weapons and defensive systems and upgrades that sent a strong, unmistakable signal to adversaries and allies alike. Europe, with the clear exception of Mrs. Thatcher, did not much like what it was hearing; the United States was "rocking the boat", taking needlessly risky—even reckless—positions. It was "destabilizing" and "confrontational", "threatening" and "provocative." Establishment Washington agreed, and when Reagan said that communists would "lie, cheat, and steal" to get what they wanted, it went into a spasm of fright.[3] Even some leading members of his own administration were said to be appalled at this bluntness. For their part, the Soviets sat up and took notice, and began to worry.

There is a widespread but inaccurate view that President Reagan was transfixed by weapons, that he sought a military buildup in the belief that these weapons would be deployed and used. That is not so. He was, in fact, fundamentally a disarmer, so much so that by the time he got to the Reykjavik meeting with Gorbachev in the fall of 1986, some thought he nearly went overboard in that direction. He fervently believed that the doctrine of Mutual Assured Destruction, with its acronym "MAD", for so long the core of our declared nuclear doctrine, was fundamentally flawed and morally bankrupt because it offered the American people as hostages in a constant upward-spiraling arms race.

He believed the proper strategy to be one of clearly gaining the upper hand, and then negotiating from a position of strength—and the last part of that strategy, negotiation, was as important as the first. That the idea of seeking military superiority reduced the arms control community to a state of funk was of little concern to him; he aimed to build up this country's strength by relying on its economic and technological advantages, and translating those elements into measurable national power—all in order to convince the other side that it was hopelessly expensive, even impossible, to keep abreast. Only when the other side was so convinced, he reckoned, would it agree to come to the table. In other words, he believed that to disarm safely we first had to arm

[3]For details, see the companion essay by Stephen Knott in this issue.

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ourselves, deliberately and persuasively: the same sermon, not so incidentally, that Churchill had preached at Fulton.

Accordingly, by mid-1981, the president decided to move ahead with the deployment of a dazzling array of weapons systems: the B-1 bomber, Stealth technology in several forms, the goal of a 600-ship Navy, dramatic new cruise and intermediate-range missiles, the M-X missile, new Trident submarines, heavy R&D funding, and more. In the first six years of this program, the U.S. procured 3,000 combat aircraft, 3,700 strategic missiles, and 10,000 tanks. In his 1991 book, *The Turn* (Poseidon Press), Don Oberdorfer quotes Rodomir Boigdanov of Moscow's Institute for the Study of the USA & Canada as saying, "You Americans are trying to destroy our economy, to interfere with our trade, to overwhelm and make us inferior in the strategic field." He was a perceptive man.

Reagan approached the Soviets on a dual track when it came time to decide whether to deploy intermediate range and cruise missiles in Europe in mid-1981. After several long, complex, and even heated discussions in the National Security Council, in which he met with resistance from surprising quarters inside his own administration, the president simply signed off on the option he wanted from the beginning, clearly signaling with hints and body language that he wanted a consensus position: The United States would deploy and at the same time negotiate intensely to make that deployment unnecessary.

As he was recuperating from the bullet that nearly took his life on March 30, 1981, President Reagan reached for pen and paper to hand-write a private letter to Leonid Brezhnev. In that and subsequent letters, as well as by his actions, Reagan tried to convey to Brezhnev both his belief that continuing an arms race would be counterproductive, and, that if there had to be one, the United States intended to win it. Brezhnev never understood the level at which Reagan made his appeal, and the responses always came back as Soviet boilerplate and bluster. By then the Soviets were clearly both baffled and alarmed at what they were seeing.

Reagan knew that he would have to squeeze the Soviets slowly and gently, but so they could feel it, as the U.S. programs to re-arm and modernize the military sector gained momentum. He never believed, as did many Western observers—including alleged experts—that the Soviet economy had the capacity to extract from its citizens limitless sacrifice for the sake of maintaining invincible military power. He knew instinctively that a healthy, growing, and productive American economy, with its scientific and technological excellence, would easily outpace the bankrupt "scientific socialist" system of the Soviet Union.

One of his key concerns was to deny the Soviet Union access to advanced technology. The objective would be to shut down, to the extent possible, the flow of scientific and technological data that migrated, legally and illegally, to the Soviet side. Some of it was simply stolen by a massive Soviet effort, and that would be difficult to stem. But much of it was sold openly, and Reagan was determined to put a stop to this, and to persuade the allies to follow suit. Accordingly, Bill Casey, the director of central intelligence, and others engaged in a major effort to close the doors from the United States and to persuade or, if necessary, cajole and pressure, our friends and allies in Europe and Japan to follow suit. It wasn't well received in Europe, as governments there really wanted to continue business as usual with the East, and resented U.S. interference. It wasn't always successful either, but the efforts during the Reagan years were persistent, even dogged, and people like Fred Iklé and Richard Perle at DoD, and Roger Robinson at NSC, worked hard with Casey to impede the eastward flow.

The weakness and inflexibility of the Soviet command economy were key factors in the Reagan strategy. To the extent that U.S. initiatives would place strains on that cumbersome machine, the Reagan administration sought to increase the pressures substantially. So, the screws were tightened, one turn at a time. At the outset of the Reagan administration, the Soviets were enjoying a bonanza through oil and gas sales to the West—for hard currency.

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During the 1970s, high oil prices had increased Soviet energy revenues more than tenfold. Western energy dollars were an important consideration in the ability of the Soviets to stay in the race, and so major efforts were undertaken, again principally by Bill Casey, to bring about a significant increase in global oil production in order to drive prices down. The benefit to the United States would be twofold: reducing the cost of energy to itself, while simultaneously undercutting the Soviet revenue stream. Every one-dollar drop in the price of oil meant a hard currency loss of between $500 million and $1 billion for the Soviets.

Led by Casey, this effort paid off handsomely as the Saudi government cooperated by increasing oil production from two million barrels to nine million. In short order the price of a barrel of oil fell from thirty to twelve dollars, inflicting a ten billion dollar annual "hit" on the Soviet Union. The machine tools, industrial robots, electronics, and computers that the Soviets needed to fulfill their ambitious Eleventh Five-Year Plan fell well beyond reach, and eventually put pressure on Moscow to plead for a "time out" in the arms race. They simply could not sustain a defense against the genuine and effective economic warfare being waged from Washington. A rapid succession of Soviet leaders—Brezhnev to Andropov to Chernenko to Gorbachev in relatively short order—did not make it easier for the Soviet side to respond effectively. Reagan used to say that he was trying to have a summit meeting with Soviet leaders, but it was hard to do because, as he put it, "they keep dying on me."

The squeeze also included a new emphasis on strategic defense. Consistent with his basic views that defense is inherently superior in moral terms to offense and his abhorrence of "MAD", Reagan had long believed that the United States should not remain defenseless against a missile attack. Accordingly, a preliminary and informal study of the prospects for missile defense was begun in the first year of the administration. By 1983, an embryonic plan was ready and in late March of that year the Strategic Defense Initiative was announced. It soon became known by the pejorative term "Star Wars" and was roundly ridiculed and denounced both at home and abroad, especially by the Soviets.

Actually, it scared the hell out of the Russians. They were not sure whether they should believe it or whether it was a massive hoax. They rolled out all their propaganda tools to counter it, they blustered and threatened, but to little avail. After having worked for years since the Cuban Missile Crisis to find a breakthrough like this themselves, the Soviets had been outmaneuvered by the Grade B movie actor from California. Their antiquated command economy and pitifully weak technological base, at least fifteen years behind in computer technology, could not hope to sustain an effort against a determined and wealthy Western adversary. The necessary billions of rubles were just not there.

But that was not all. The "squeeze" was also extended to other crucial fronts. The Soviets had an enormous presence and stake in Afghanistan, and the Reagan administration made the decision to engage by providing a reliable supply of money and arms to the Afghan *mujaheddin*. From late 1981 onward, the administration increased its efforts to open the flow of weapons, principally through Pakistan, and to get the Saudis and other friendly Arab states to finance that flow. Training, communications gear, intelligence from overhead satellite reconnaissance, rifles, mines, mortars, and eventually Stinger missiles for use against Soviet HIND helicopters—all of this converted the *mujaheddin* from a ragtag guerrilla outfit to a formidable military force. Heavy casualties—as many as twenty thousand by the spring of 1983—were inflicted on Soviet and Afghan regime troops, and the venture was turned into a Vietnam-like quagmire for the Soviets. The goals of U.S. policy were to inflict maximum casualties, to raise the price of the war—and to demoralize the Soviet high command. Remarkably, the war was also carried directly into Soviet Central Asia, and *mujaheddin*-supported strikes there became a veritable nightmare for Moscow. Late in 1986, after sustaining huge casualties and the loss of support from the Soviet people, Moscow retreated in defeat.

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At the same time, in Angola, aid to Jonas Savimbi was escalated, turning a guerrilla war into a full-fledged civil war, engaging the Cuban and other Soviet-sponsored partisans there in a direct confrontation. In Central America the screws had been applied early in the administration, and progress in stopping subversion eventually bore fruit in U.S. policy toward El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Grenada. Fidel Castro got the message and a degree of stability returned gradually to the region. In Poland, Solidarity and the Catholic Church put up a fierce resistance to the Soviet-backed Jaruselzki regime. In this case, it was not weapons that Washington and Bill Casey supplied, but copy machines, computers, and clandestine radio broadcasting stations. Friends, even neutrals like the Swedes, were enlisted in these efforts, which succeeded brilliantly.

U.S. intelligence capabilities were beefed up, with dramatic increases in both human and technical collection and enhanced delivery of intelligence information to decision makers. Chinese help was sought in Afghanistan, and Chinese missile monitoring sites produced important intelligence information for the United States. A sophisticated campaign of disinformation was begun, especially in the technological field. As Peter Schweizer relates in his outstanding study, *Victory* (Atlantic Monthly Press, 1994), deliberately faulty gas and oil extraction technology, highly inaccurate designs for offshore drilling platforms, and mainframe computer systems designed to generate pure garbage information into the Soviet research and development cycle were passed on to Soviet agents who, to the delight of our intelligence community, even bought some of this bogus data for cash.

The president was known, rightly, as the "Great Communicator", and he used his talents well in the service of his foreign policy strategy. He sought to harness the information services of the United States Information Agency, the Voice of America, Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty to spread his message. While difficult to do and even more difficult to evaluate, Reagan's global crusade for democracy—criticized as "hokey" and primitive by many critics—had some direct appeal for the many nationalities in the Soviet Union. The radios beamed an unending stream of information and encouragement to these peoples, hoping to increase their level of dissatisfaction with the system.

So, it came to pass that the old fellow from California eventually prepared to leave Washington, his term expired. He had come to town with a game plan, simple but understandable. To be sure, it became a complex plan as elements were added to it and improvisations were made. Implementing the plan required a lot of money and a lot of courage, and in some respects it failed—as in the "loony tunes" of the Iran-Contra scandal, a tawdry sideshow to the main attraction of the struggle with the Soviets. But in the end the United States called the Soviet hand, and the Soviets and their satraps folded.

The rest is recent history and there is no need to recite it. The Bush administration was the steward of the final collapse. As such, it managed what was essentially the result of heavy lifting in the preceding decades, and particularly of the two Reagan administrations. It could scarcely believe its good luck, and almost resisted accepting it—by entreating Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia not to act too rashly in slipping the bonds of the Soviet Union; by declaring that the reunification of Germany was not on the agenda for the time being (just eight months before it was a fait accompli!); and by suggesting to the Ukrainians that they not bolt from the Soviet Union lest that contribute to instability in Central Europe. But, that said, the Bush administration did in the end complete, professionally and smoothly, what had been set in motion by its predecessors, and that is to its lasting credit.

Nothing I have said is intended to give offense, or to make light of the contributions of those who guided us through more than four decades of Cold War tension and misery. But I was around when Ronald Reagan changed the game plan, and I think he deserves an enormous amount of credit for having made it possible, as well as providing the inspiration, the vision, and the energy to get it done. □

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Reagan's Critics

Stephen F. Knott

THE MEASURE OF "greatness" in American presidents is often the retrospective appreciation of their willingness to "stay the course" in the face of determined opposition from powerful opponents. So it was with Jefferson and Jackson, Polk and Lincoln, Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman. By this standard, Ronald Reagan must be regarded as one of the most successful presidents of the twentieth century, particularly in foreign policy.

Reagan confronted powerful forces of cynical, defeatist elites whose memories of Vietnam had led them to abandon belief in America as a force for good in the world, and unlike Richard Nixon, who is often credited with the most successful Cold War foreign policy, Reagan refused to let scathing criticism from Congress, the media, and the universities grind him down. He also avoided the cynicism of Nixon and Henry Kissinger, believing that America, as Reagan himself often put it in Governor Winthrope's memorable words, "was a shining city upon a hill."

Most important, of course, he succeeded, and he succeeded because he was right. The record speaks for itself.

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Shocking the Elites

IN NO FOREIGN policy arena was Reagan's personal influence more pronounced than in policy toward the Soviet regime, and in no other area was his judgment so roundly criticized by "experts." The Soviet Union was ruled, in Reagan's view, by a sclerotic group of oppressive apparatchiks intent on world domination, but its economy was a "Mickey Mouse system" on the verge of collapse, a collapse Reagan intended to hasten. By engaging them in an arms race they could not win, and isolating them from Western commerce (with the notable exception of American grain), Reagan hoped to win the Cold War. "I had always believed that, as an economic system, Communism was doomed", Reagan noted in his memoirs. Once in office, his intelligence briefings confirmed that belief, showing that "the Soviet economy was being held together with baling wire; it was a basket case, partly because of massive spending on armaments. . . . I wondered how we as a nation could use these cracks in the Soviet system to accelerate the process of collapse."[1] As early as June 1981, Reagan publicly made the remarkable prediction

[1]Ronald Reagan, *An American Life: The Autobiography* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1990), pp. 237-8.

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that "I think we are seeing the first beginning cracks: the beginning of the end."[2]

One weapon in Reagan's arsenal was an ample use of his formidable rhetorical skills to take the offensive against Marxist-Leninism.[3] Within days of his inauguration, Reagan accused the Kremlin leadership of recognizing no morality except that which would advance their cause; that they reserved to themselves "the right to commit any crime, to lie, to cheat." This was a shockingly blunt accusation, particularly in light of the rhetorical restraint exercised toward the Soviet Union by the immediately preceding administrations. Reagan's rhetorical assault on the Kremlin reached its peak on March 8, 1983, with his address to the National Association of Evangelicals, perhaps the most famous one of his presidency—the "Evil Empire" speech. After noting America's own legacy of evil regarding its treatment of minorities, Reagan asked his audience to pray for those who lived under totalitarian rule. He went on to note that as long as these regimes continued to "preach the supremacy of the state, declare its omnipotence over individual man, and predict its eventual domination of all peoples on the earth, they are the focus of evil in the modern world."[4]

With this statement, Ronald Reagan was seen by foreign policy experts as diverse as Richard Nixon and Strobe Talbott to have crossed a very dangerous line. Talbott accused Reagan of bearing the bulk of the responsibility for worsening U.S.-Soviet relations by not accepting military parity as the basis of relations with Moscow, and by challenging the legitimacy of the regime as an "evil empire" doomed to fail. Reagan's use of the bully pulpit to "bait" the Soviet bear "made a bad situation worse." As Talbott asserted, "when a chief of state talks that way, he roils Soviet insecurities."[5] Talbott's basic view was shared by the recently rehabilitated Richard Nixon, whose Watergate sins were overlooked by some of the media in light of his more conciliatory tone toward the Soviets. Talbott had conducted a highly publicized interview with Nixon, published in December 1982, in which they seemed to agree that isolating and publicly criticizing the Soviet Union was a mistake. Talbott saw Nixon as the last president capable of conducting a coherent and "successful policy for managing the rivalry between the superpowers." Nixon (himself inherently incapable of delivering a speech with the theme of good versus evil) rejected Reagan's belief that the Soviet Union could be weakened through external pressures.

> We've got to make them understand that we're not out to get them. I know there's a school of thought that if we can fence them in with sanctions, their whole rotten system will come tumbling down. There's a school of thought that hard-line policies on our part will induce change for the better on their part. I wish that were the case, but it's just not going to happen.

Nixon made it clear that he hoped to see a change in both the tone and substance of Reagan's dealings with Moscow.[6]

Looming over this question of Reagan's

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[2]Quoted in "TRB", *The New Republic*, July 4-11, 1981, p. 2.

[3]Ronald Reagan, *Speaking My Mind: Selected Speeches* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989), p. 108.

[4]Reagan, *Speaking My Mind*, p. 178.

[5]Strobe Talbott, "Behind the Bear's Angry Growl", *Time*, May 21, 1984, pp. 24-7.

[6]Strobe Talbott, "A Call for 'Hardheaded Détente'", *Time*, December 27, 1982, p. 18. Nixon was repeatedly wrong throughout the 1980s in his predictions regarding Soviet behavior; for instance, in Afghanistan Nixon predicted Gorbachev "will be tough in keeping what he has; he can't risk losing any part of the Soviet empire he has inherited." In his book *1999: Victory Without War*, written in 1988, Nixon described the Afghan invasion as "a bold but well-studied gambit" and said that "Moscow has the power to prevail." In the same book, Nixon predicted that the Soviet Union would do whatever was necessary "including a brutal military invasion" to quell any uprisings in its East European satellites.

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"provocative" rhetoric was the notion that the superpowers were drifting toward nuclear war. A deep sense of unease pervaded large sections of European and American public opinion, particularly among the media and academics, but also among many members of various legislative bodies. Reagan's rhetoric, frequently criticized for its "harshness", was more than matched by that of those urging accommodation. Senator Edward Kennedy remarked in 1982 that "the arms race rushes ahead toward nuclear confrontation that could well mean the annihilation of the human race."[7] Former Secretary of State Cyrus Vance found the Reagan administration's treatment of the Soviets "needlessly provocative . . . bear-baiting", and added that "the clock is ticking . . . and the pace of development of weapons is proceeding at a rapid pace."[8] Senate Minority Whip and 1984 presidential candidate Alan Cranston was fond of quoting a report of the American Psychiatric Association, which found "that half the children of America are presently so concerned with the nuclear war threat that they don't know what to do about their careers, marriages, families. That's a terrible nightmare hanging over our children."[9] Cranston lost out in the Democratic primaries to former Vice President Walter Mondale, who pledged that if elected he would get on the hotline to Moscow and say to Mr. Andropov, "Let's sit down in Geneva this afternoon . . . and I would say . . . in the name of humanity can't we negotiate a verifiable nuclear freeze on nuclear weapons?"[10] Some Reagan opponents went so far as to applaud the efforts of the British historian and anti-nuclear activist, E. P. Thompson, who argued that the United States was "more dangerous and provocative" than the Soviet Union, and that it was "in Washington, rather than in Moscow, that scenarios are dreamed up for theater wars . . . and . . . that the Alchemists of Superkill . . . press forward." Thompson preferred a Soviet occupation to nuclear war, because an occupation, at least, offered "the possibility, after some years, of resurgence and recuperation."[11] Thompson's missive was warmly received by, among others, John Kenneth Galbraith, George McGovern, William Appleman Williams, and Robert Heilbroner. "It's the question, after all, of whether we, our children and our grandchildren will live", was Galbraith's sophisticated way of posing the issue.[12]

Reagan also had to deal with a massive nuclear freeze campaign on both sides of the Atlantic, a campaign described by Speaker of the House Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr., as "one of the most remarkable political movements I have ever seen during my years in public service." The movement reached its peak in 1982 and 1983 in the months leading up to the deployment of Pershing II and cruise missiles in Western Europe.[13] One of the leaders of the American freeze effort, Dr. Helen Caldicott, personified the movement's appeal to a universal order free from the "artificial distinctions" imposed by male politicians: "We're thinking of our babies; there are no Communist babies; there are no capitalist babies. A baby is a baby is a baby."[14] The electronic media was quick to jump on the freeze bandwagon, with ABC's "The Day After" depicting the impact of a nuclear strike on Kansas. Its showing followed by days the arrival of the first cruise missiles in Britain and appeared on the eve of a vote in the West German parliament to accept the Pershing II missiles. Commercial time was purchased by the Cranston campaign and vari-

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[7]Quoted in *National Review*, April 2, 1982, p. 337.

[8]"TRB", *The New Republic*, July 4-11, 1981, p. 2.

[9]"TRB", *The New Republic*, February 28, 1983, p. 4.

[10]Morton Kondracke, "Fritz on Fire", *The New Republic*, February 7, 1983, p. 17.

[11]E. P. Thompson, "A Letter to America", *The Nation*, January 24, 1981, pp. 86-7.

[12]Letters, *The Nation*, February 28, 1981, p. 226.

[13]O'Neill quoted in Edward J. Markey's *Nuclear Peril: The Politics of Proliferation* (Cambridge, MA: Ballinger Publishing Company, 1982), p. 132.

[14]Quoted in the *New York Times*, June 13, 1982, p. 43.

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ous freeze groups; one advertisement featured actor Paul Newman inviting viewers to write or call for a "nuclear war prevention kit." Television news divisions fed the frenzy, with NBC broadcasting a documentary (on the eve of a massive anti-nuclear demonstration in New York City) entitled "Facing Up To The Bomb." Promotions for the program fostered the notion that doomsday was just around the bend, with lines like, "The Nuclear Strategy Game: Are We Nearing Checkmate? . . . Watch this broadcast as if your life depends on it. It may."

Perhaps most worrisome to the Reagan administration was the support for the freeze among the American Catholic Bishops. Catholic voters represented a substantial bloc within the Reagan coalition, and as the election of 1984 neared, the prospect of a confrontation with some of the Bishops was troublesome. In October 1982, a five man Committee on War and Peace chaired by Chicago Archbishop Joseph L. Bernardin issued a statement branding elements of U.S. nuclear strategy immoral. The Committee condemned the first use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances and stated that even if U.S. cities were attacked first, "no Christian can rightfully carry out orders or policies deliberately aimed at killing noncombatants." Reagan and his advisors tried to persuade the Bishops that their proposed stance would weaken the American arms control position, but to no avail. The administration sensed that the Soviets were attempting to manipulate Western opinion when, two days after the Bishops' statement was revealed, Leonid Brezhnev announced that the Soviet Union would expand its arsenal because the United States was threatening to "push the world into the flames of nuclear war." The Reagan administration appeared momentarily helpless to stop the freeze juggernaut.

The message to President Reagan in all of this was, according to the media, that "the consensus that has supported the U.S. strategy of nuclear deterrence for thirty-five years is breaking apart."[15] Unquestionably, that consensus in the United States and among its European allies was under great stress during Reagan's first term. His radical program to hasten the downfall of the Soviet Union was a frightening prospect to many in the West who had become somewhat complacent (or resigned) during the détente of the 1970s. Reagan told the world in a highly publicized address to members of the British Parliament that he intended to launch a "crusade for freedom", the long term goal of which was to "leave Marxism-Leninism on the ash heap of history." Reagan would later state that this was part of his consistent attempt to "speak the truth about them [the Soviets] for a change, rather than hiding reality behind the niceties of diplomacy."[16] Reagan's June 1982 Westminster speech was seen as further evidence of his lack of foreign policy sophistication. Concern that he was unable to fathom the complexities of foreign policy was shared by Europeans and Americans alike. The *New York Times* reported that the speech was one of the "dark spots" that marred an otherwise successful trip to Britain: "The stark, democracy-versus-Communism language of Mr. Reagan's speech . . . stunned many Britons. . . . Andrew Alexander, a conservative columnist for the conservative *Daily Mail* . . . described Mr. Reagan's speech as an 'oversimplified view of the world.'" A pessimistic *Times* editorial dismissed the speech as "Ronald Reagan's Flower Power" by stating that Soviet society had always endured great hardship to resist foreign danger and that only during periods of "East-West thaw" did the potential for change occur in the Soviet bloc.[17] Prior to Reagan's speech, former Prime Minister James Callaghan declared that "the Europeans have a better understanding of the complexi-

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[15]"Freeze Vote: Body Blow to Arms Strategy?" in *U.S. News and World Report*, November 15, 1982, p. 32.

[16]Reagan, *Speaking My Mind*, pp. 107-20.

[17]Steven Rattner, "Britons Reassured by Reagan's Visit", *New York Times*, June 10, 1982, p. A-17, and "Ronald Reagan's Flower Power", *New York Times*, June 9, 1982, p. A26.

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ties of the present world difficulties than the United States." Former French Foreign Minister Couve de Murville echoed Callaghan when he wrote that he "dream[ed] . . . of a real American foreign policy which takes realities into account." Robert Kaiser, writing in *The International Herald Tribune*, observed that "it seems hard to be a sophisticated European and also an admirer of Ronald Reagan", citing—and presumably agreeing with—a conservative British editor who judged that the Reaganites have "alarmingly simplistic beliefs that divide the world into goodies and baddies."[18]

In the wake of the Westminster speech, and in light of the considerable pro-freeze opposition arrayed against him, many observers wondered how Reagan intended to carry out his offensive against Soviet Communism. Persistence was one way. The refusal to halt the deployment of the intermediate range missiles in the face of stiff domestic and international opposition represented one of Reagan's most impressive triumphs. He stayed the course and, making full use of the "bully pulpit", Reagan outmaneuvered, not just the Soviets, but the freeze movement as well. As time wore on, the credibility of this movement was weakened as repeated predictions of an imminent Armageddon proved false. The Strategic Defense Initiative, announced in March 1983, weakened its broad appeal still further. Moreover, Reagan adroitly paced himself in using his anti-Soviet rhetoric; he would launch stinging attacks on the Soviet Union—and then pull back and reassure Western public opinion that he would not take the West into war. Evidence that Reagan's rhetoric stung the Soviet leadership was attested to by Sovietologist Seweryn Bialer, no admirer of the president's foreign policy. Based on his three visits to Moscow in 1983-4, Bialer reported that:

> President Reagan's rhetoric has badly shaken the self-esteem and patriotic pride of the Soviet political elites. The administration's self-righteous moralistic tone, its reduction of Soviet achievements to crimes by international outlaws from an 'evil empire'—such language stunned and humiliated the Soviet leaders . . . [who] believe that President Reagan is determined to deny the Soviet Union nothing less than its legitimacy and status as a global power . . . status . . . they thought had been conceded once and for all by Reagan's predecessors.[19]

Through his first term, Reagan won many Americans over to his view of the Soviets, and by the time of his November 1985 summit meeting with Mikhail Gorbachev in Geneva, a majority of the American people agreed with his description of the Soviet Union as an "evil empire" and an expansionist threat. The Soviets themselves also came around to his position on certain issues, for instance agreeing to the so-called zero-zero option on intermediate-range ballistic missiles that most pundits had greeted initially as non-negotiable on the Soviet side and therefore unserious.[20]

By reminding his countrymen and their allies repeatedly of his conviction that free societies were legitimate and totalitarian regimes were not, and by refusing to be bogged down by "experts" who settled for the status quo, Reagan rejuvenated the West and contributed to the decline of the Soviet Union. He did what many considered not only truly dangerous in an age of nuclear weapons, but unjustified in a relativistic world: He conducted foreign policy in such a way as to make clear that he viewed the American political order to be clearly superi-

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[18]All three quotes are taken from Owen Harries, "European 'Sophistication' vs. American 'Naivete'", *Commentary*, December 1983, p. 46.

[19]Seweryn Bialer, "Danger in Moscow", the *New York Review of Books*, February 16, 1984.

[20]This proposal was routinely condemned as "non-negotiable" by experts such as Strobe Talbott and Raymond Garthoff. See Raymond Garthoff, *The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, December 1984.

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or to that of its main rival. By Christmas Day of 1991 the Soviet Union had ceased to exist. It was the victim, in part—as former Soviet Former Minister Alexander Bessmertnykh put it—of Reagan's policies, particularly the Strategic Defense Initiative which, Bessmertnykh believed, "accelerated the decline of the Soviet Union."[21] In the end, Reagan proved the advocates of the status quo wrong, though many, such as Strobe Talbott, are still loath to admit it.[22] It did not matter, for this unsophisticated B-grade actor had seen his vision become reality.

The Reagan Doctrine and the "Quagmire"

THERE WAS ANOTHER dimension to Ronald Reagan's anti-Soviet plan—what came to be known as the Reagan Doctrine. As with many of his policies, the "Reagan Doctrine" was not the result of careful analysis and planning. "Not one nano-second" went into crafting this "doctrine", recalled Reagan's National Security Adviser Robert McFarlane, and the term itself was actually coined by Charles Krauthammer in *Time* magazine and was never officially adopted by the Reagan administration. Yet despite its slapdash evolution, it provided the intellectual underpinnings for a highly effective covert campaign to topple a number of Soviet client states. Krauthammer arrived at the "doctrine" by extrapolating from a passage in Reagan's 1985 State of the Union address, which argued that "we must not break faith with those who are risking their lives—on every continent, from Afghanistan to Nicaragua—to defy Soviet-supported aggression and secure rights which have been ours from birth." In practice, not breaking faith was to come to mean launching an offensive that, unlike previous policies, "supports not the status quo but revolution."[23]

One of the first battlegrounds in this offensive was Poland; in May 1982 President Reagan signed a secret order, National Security Decision Directive 32, to destabilize the Polish government. This destabilization was to be accomplished by keeping the Solidarity movement alive, with help from the Catholic Church and Pope John Paul II himself. This union between the Reagan administration and the Catholic Church was "one of the great secret alliances of all time", according to Reagan's first National Security Adviser, Richard Allen. Money for the outlawed union came from the CIA, the National Endowment for Democracy, secret Vatican bank accounts, and Western trade unions. The network created by the Vatican and the United States funneled tons of communica-

[21]Quoted in Richard Pipes, "Misinterpreting the Cold War: The Hard-Liners Had It Right", *Foreign Affairs* (January/February 1995), p. 159. Former KGB General Oleg Kalugin echoed Bessmertnykh when he noted that Reagan's policies had served as a "catalyst" for the collapse of the Soviet Union. See Peter Schweizer, *Victory: The Reagan Administration's Secret Strategy That Hastened the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1994), jacket cover.

[22]See for instance Talbott's essay "Rethinking the Red Menace" in which he credits Mikhail Gorbachev with ending the Cold War and dismantling the Soviet empire. Talbott describes the "awe, suspense and admiration" one experienced watching Gorbachev. He goes on to note: "Scenarios for a Soviet invasion of Western Europe have always had a touch of paranoid fantasy about them. . . . The doves in the Great Debate of the past 40 years were right all along . . . [the breakdown of the Soviet economy is the result of] self-inflicted wounds rather than the result of Western boycotts or other punitive policies. . . . Whatever the next stage of history comes to be called, there is no question Gorbachev has made it possible." *Time*, January 1, 1990, pp. 66-72 (this is the issue in which Gorbachev was named "Man of the Decade").

[23]Peter W. Rodman, *More Precious Than Peace: The Cold War and the Struggle for the Third World* (New York: Scribner's, 1994), pp. 259-60.

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tions equipment into Poland. With this equipment, numerous underground newsletters flourished (over four hundred by 1985), and Solidarity routinely broke into government radio programming with messages like "Solidarity Lives!" or "Resist!" By 1987, the pressures exerted by Solidarity and the Catholic Church had forced the Soviet-backed government of General Wojciech Jaruzelski to begin discussions with the church that ultimately led to the election of Lech Walesa as president of Poland.

In Afghanistan, the Reagan administration enjoyed bipartisan support for a bold covert operation to bolster the Afghan *mujaheddin* and force the withdrawal of the Soviets. The foundation for Reagan's campaign was his approval in March 1985 of National Security Decision Directive 166, which sought the defeat and complete removal of Soviet troops. About two billion dollars worth of aid was provided to the freedom fighters. The key item in this aid was the Stinger anti-aircraft missile, the arrival of which tilted the war in favor of the *mujaheddin*. But it also included satellite data on Soviet targets, intercepts of Soviet communications, the establishment of clandestine communications networks for the *mujaheddin*, long-range sniper rifles, wire-guided anti-tank missiles and a targeting device for mortars that was linked to a U.S. Navy satellite. Seven weeks after the Stingers made their first kill in September 1986, Mikhail Gorbachev held a Politburo meeting in which he made clear his impatience with the war, and in December it was announced that the Soviets would withdraw no later than December 1988.

Many of the American skeptics who were critical of Reagan's nuclear policies also doubted his ability to influence Soviet conduct in Afghanistan. *Newsweek* reported in 1984 that "the *mujaheddin* can never be strong enough to drive the Soviets out of Afghanistan", and as late as 1987 the magazine claimed that "the anti-Communist insurgents can never hope to defeat their better equipped adversaries."[24] Nicholas Daniloff reported in *U.S. News and World Report* that "defeating the Soviet Army is an impossible dream", while Richard Cohen in the *Washington Post* wrote in 1985 that "we are covertly supplying arms to guerrillas who don't stand the slightest chance of winning. . . . Afghanistan is not the Soviet version of Vietnam." (Three years later, as the Soviet collapse in Afghanistan was evident, the title of a Cohen piece in the *Washington Post* read "The Soviets' Vietnam."[25])

Despite the skepticism in some quarters, Reagan's policies toward Poland and Afghanistan enjoyed widespread bipartisan support. The same cannot be said for his efforts in Central America, a region where guilt over America's past interventions cast a shadow over any attempt to prevent Marxist-tinged nationalist movements from acquiring power. "We have unclean hands", declared Congressman Vic Fazio during a 1986 debate over Contra funding.[26]

In Nicaragua, Reagan chose once again to reverse a Carter policy that accepted the status quo—in this instance the legitimacy of Nicaragua's Sandinista government. As Carter administration official Anthony Lake put it, "seeking either to overthrow the victorious new Sandinista government or to sever completely the long-standing ties between its leaders and their friends in Cuba seemed unrealistic." These sentiments were echoed by Carter's Under Secretary of State Warren

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[24]Russell Watson et al., "Inside Afghanistan", *Newsweek*, June 11, 1984, p. 55, and Russell Watson and John Barry, "Insurgencies: Two of A Kind", *Newsweek*, March 23, 1987, p. 32, respectively.

[25]Nicholas Daniloff, "Kremlin Stand: No Afghan Pullout Without Victory", *U.S. News and World Report*, December 24, 1984, pp. 29-30; Richard Cohen, "Why Aid Afghanistan?", *Washington Post*, January 2, 1985, p. A15; and Cohen, "The Soviets' Vietnam", *Washington Post*, April 22, 1988, p. A23.

[26]Quoted in Rodman, p. 241.

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Christopher, who in 1979 judged the Sandinista government to be "moderate and pluralistic", with a very diverse leadership desirous of "close and friendly relations" with the United States. In December 1981, President Reagan began the process of reversal by signing National Security Decision Directive 17, which authorized $19 million to set up a five-hundred man force designed to disrupt the infrastructure he believed Nicaragua was using to supply guerrilla forces in El Salvador.

In waging war covertly against the Sandinistas, Reagan was defying the prevailing opinion in Congress, academia, and among columnists that America was on the wrong side of history in resisting Third World "nationalist" movements. As Senator Christopher Dodd of Connecticut, the Democrats' main spokesman on Central American policy argued, "the Sandinistas may not be winners, but right now we are backing sure losers." Dodd added that the United States needed to "move with the tide of history rather than stand against it."[27] One of the chief architects of President Carter's Central American policy, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Viron Vaky, urged the Reagan administration to "accept what has happened in Nicaragua as a deplorable fait accompli that it cannot reverse at an acceptable cost."[28] As the *Boston Globe* put it, "Have we grown enough through experiences as different as losing the Vietnam War and seeing the Third World anew through Peace Corps eyes to understand that it is possible for the United States to get ahead of the curve of history if we want to?"[29]

The argument that was initially most effective in terms of weakening public support for Reagan's policies was that Nicaragua was "the next Vietnam", and one of the more impressive accomplishments of Reagan's term of office was helping to disabuse the nation of the idea that whenever America used force it inevitably headed into—the favored term—a quagmire. The idea was given expression by, among others, columnist Mary McGrory, who insisted that "the Great Explainer cannot delete their [the public's] memories of Vietnam. They hate jungle wars; they know military aid is followed by U.S. troops."[30] During the debates over supplying aid to the Contras Senator Jim Sasser pleaded that "as the father of a seventeen year old son, I say Mr. President, let's not rush blindly into that quagmire. We've done that before", while one of his Democratic colleagues accused the president of wanting "a Tonkin Gulf resolution for Central America."[31] Indeed, many members of Reagan's own party had doubts about the wisdom of the Contra war and raised the specter of Vietnam: "I'm a conservative who's been with them all the way, but Vietnam is a lesson", Congresswoman Lynn Martin noted in 1983. But the core of the opposition came from House Democrats, whose leader, Speaker Tip O'Neill, denounced the Contras as "butchers and maimers." He added, "I don't think the president of the United States will be happy until U.S. troops are in there."[32] Nonetheless, and in the face of this emotional outpouring, Reagan publicly declared that his goal was to "remove" the Nicaraguan government.

Reagan has been criticized by some conservatives (including Jeane Kirkpatrick, Caspar Weinberger, William Casey, and Judge William Clark) for not being suffi-

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[27]"Text of Democrats' Response to Reagan's Speech", *New York Times*, April 28, 1983, p. A13.

[28]Viron P. Vaky, "Positive Containment in Nicaragua", *Foreign Policy* (Fall 1987), p. 57.

[29]Quoted in Paul Boyer, ed., *Reagan as President* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1990), p. 240.

[30]Mary McGrory, "A Showdown Deferred", *Washington Post*, April 17, 1986, p. 2.

[31]Russell Watson et al., "How to Handle Nicaragua", *Newsweek*, April 29, 1985, p. 38; Senator Jim Sasser, *Congressional Record-Senate*, March 18, 1986, S 2906.

[32]Watson et al., "How to Handle Nicaragua", p. 38.

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ciently overt in his opposition to the Nicaraguan regime, perhaps even resorting to a conventional assault. But there is simply no way that Reagan, even at the peak of his communicative skills, could have sold that option to the American people.[33]

In the end, despite faltering support for efforts to destabilize the Sandinistas on the part of the Bush administration, and a Sandinista campaign of violent intimidation, Violeta Chamorro's forces won the February 1990 election. Without the application of military pressure by the Contras, the Sandinistas would have solidified their hold on the country, and would have felt no need to engage in diplomatic negotiations, which led, despite the best efforts of the Sandinistas, to a relatively fair election. As Mexican author Octavio Paz noted, "thankfully, this part of the world has finally given up Marx for Montesquieu."[34] Yes, but it needed a little help from Ronald Reagan.

Relegitimizing The Use of Force

WHILE FEAR OF another Vietnam was a constant source of criticism against Reagan's covert campaigns, it was an even larger factor in conflicts where American forces were engaged overtly. Though it is now fashionable to deride Reagan's use of force against Grenada and Libya as meaningless sideshows against third-rate powers, they were not viewed that way at the time. Again, they were seen by many as revealing Reagan's inability to learn the lesson of Vietnam: America would experience only more pain and suffering from projecting force in the Third World.

The invasion of Grenada, which came on the heels of the bombing of the Marine barracks in Lebanon, showed that Reagan would not be immobilized and intimidated by even a serious setback, but would move with dispatch.[35] His critics did the best they could by contending that Reagan had launched the Grenada operation to erase Lebanon from the public memory, but planning for the assault had in fact begun well before the bombing of the Marine barracks. While the administration had been expressing concern about the Grenadan regime's connections to Cuba for several months, it was the overthrow of the government of Maurice Bishop by a group of harder-line Marxists that prompted American intervention. The Reagan administration was concerned about the presence of American medical students on the island, and the reaction of neighboring Caribbean states to a heightened Cuban and Soviet presence in their region.

Once the attack was underway in the last week of October, 1983, the barrage of criticism was steady, reflecting the anxiety that for the first time since the Vietnam War the United States had committed ground forces to an attack. Speaker O'Neill declared that "we can't go the way of gunboat diplomacy. His policy is wrong. His policy is frightening." Senator Daniel Moynihan observed that, "I don't know how you restore democracy at the point of a bayonet", while Senator Gary Hart argued that "we are dealing with an administration that is not inclined to obey the law."

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[33]See Rodman, *More Precious Than Peace*, pp. 246-251. On this point Reagan is quoted complaining to his chief of staff Kenneth Duberstein, "Those sonsofbitches won't be happy until we have 25,000 troops in Managua, and I'm not going to do that."

[34]Quoted in Stephen Schwartz, *A Strange Silence: The Emergence of Democracy in Nicaragua* (San Francisco: Institute for Contemporary Studies, 1992), p. 129.

[35]On October 23, 1983, two hundred and forty-one U.S. marines and fifty-eight French soldiers were killed in two separate suicide bombings directed against the multinational peacekeeping forces in Lebanon. It was, as Secretary of State Shultz put it, "the worst single disaster of the Reagan administration." Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph: My Years as Secretary of State* (New York: Scribner's, 1993), p. 227.

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Foreign reaction was also highly critical; most disturbing to the administration was that of Margaret Thatcher, who strongly condemned Reagan's action against a member of the British Commonwealth whose head of state was the queen. François Mitterrand described it as "a surprising action in relation to international law", and Helmut Kohl stated that "if we had been consulted we would have advised against it." The UN General Assembly denounced the invasion in a 108 to 9 vote, while seven Democratic members of the House, led by Rep. Ted Weiss, moved to impeach Reagan. For the *New York Times*, Grenada was an exercise in moral equivalence, "a reverberating demonstration to the world that America has no more respect for laws and borders, for the codes of civilization, than the Soviet Union."[36]

The repercussions from the invasion were felt throughout the Caribbean, with the Cubans emerging as the big losers because of their inability to come to the aid of an ally. The government of Surinam, which had been warming up to Castro, gave his diplomats and military advisors one-way tickets to Cuba, and the Nicaraguan government informed the United States that anytime Reagan wanted to evacuate Americans from their country they would be happy to make appropriate arrangements. The Grenadan people welcomed Reagan as a hero when he visited the island in February 1986, but, more importantly, Reagan paved the way to restoring force as an option for his successors, an option that would be exercised to great effect in actions ranging from Panama to Kuwait to Haiti.

Another arena where Reagan projected force was in the Middle East, against Libyan leader Colonel Muammar Qaddafi. Reagan was involved in series of low-level confrontations with Qaddafi, beginning in the early months of his first term and lasting up until the final days of his second administration. In contrast to Carter, who sought to avoid confrontations with Qaddafi, Reagan seemed almost to welcome the opportunity to get into a scrap with him. When, in early August, 1981, at a White House meeting about planned maneuvers in the Gulf of Sidra, one Cabinet member asked, "What about hot pursuit?", Reagan's response was, "All the way into the hangar."[37] The first incident occurred shortly afterwards, on the night of August 18, 1981, when two U.S. Navy F-14s flying inside Qaddafi's so-called "Zone of Death" shot down two Soviet-built SU-22s.

This relatively insignificant skirmish was nonetheless a clear demonstration of a new American assertiveness. It rattled some European allies used to a complacent America, and for some it dredged up yet again the ghost of quagmires past. Predictably, the *New York Times* asserted that the Reagan administration would not automatically win "full benefit of any doubt—not from a generation that remembers maritime milestones called the Bay of Pigs and the Gulf of Tonkin."[38] For J. William Fulbright, too, the similarity with Vietnam was striking: "The recent incident in the Gulf of Sidra is reminiscent of the Gulf of Tonkin on August 4, 1964. . . . We should remind ourselves of the ultimate consequences of that small incident in the Bay of Tonkin seventeen years ago."[39]

The conflict between Reagan and Qaddafi peaked in April 1986 in the aftermath of a Libyan-sponsored bombing of a West Berlin disco frequented by American soldiers. Reagan decided to retaliate, ordering a combined assault of Air Force and Navy aircraft. As Reagan told the American people, "Today we have done what we had to do. If necessary, we shall do it again. . . . Despite our repeated warnings, Qaddafi con-

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[36]Rodman, *More Precious Than Peace*, p. 252.

[37]Reagan, *An American Life*, p. 289.

[38] "Over the Gulf of Sidra", *New York Times*, August 20, 1981, p. A30.

[39]J. William Fulbright, "Another Gulf of Tonkin?", *Washington Post*, August 23, 1981, p. C8.

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tinued his reckless policy of intimidation, his relentless pursuit of terror. He counted on America to be passive. He counted wrong."[40]

Reaction to the raid among leaders in Western Europe was decidedly negative, as typified by the comment from Chancellor Kohl that "force is not a very promising way of dealing with things."[41] Many congressmen waited for the results of public opinion polls before taking a stand, although those who spoke out early expressed some misgivings. Senate Majority Leader Robert Byrd noted, "I'm concerned about this approach we're taking. . . . Are we going to do this again and again?" Some criticism went further, with Senator Lowell Weicker arguing that Reagan's attack was "no different than what Qaddafi had done", while false reports that Qaddafi's adopted daughter had been killed in the raid led Jimmy Carter to comment, "If someone had killed Amy it would have been the worst blow that could be delivered to me. I would have sworn as long as my life existed, I would retaliate."[42]

The Libyan raid was in part the result of a belief prevalent in the administration in 1986 that Reagan had altered the correlation of overall power with Moscow and that the Russians were on the psychological defensive. This seemed to be confirmed when the Soviets stood by and allowed Libya to be attacked without retaliation. Another effect of the raid, though mitigated by later revelations that the administration had sold weapons to the Iranians, was to stiffen the spine of Egypt and some European countries regarding terrorism, particularly the Qaddafi-sponsored brand. His isolation grew deeper, and his terrorist activity went into a steep decline.

President Reagan also initiated a more assertive U.S. military presence elsewhere in the Middle East. What was to culminate in Operation Desert Storm began with his offer on March 7, 1987, to reflag eleven Kuwaiti tankers and provide naval escorts for them, protecting the flow of oil from Iraqi or Iranian attack. This plan was postponed, however, after an Iraqi warplane fired an Exocet missile into the *USS Stark*, killing thirty-seven Americans. Congressional and media opposition to the reflagging reached a crescendo, and the quagmire metaphor was once again prominent. The *Miami Herald* insisted that "Congress must do whatever is necessary to stop Presidential ego and pugnacity from leading this nation into disaster once again."[43] As Secretary of State Shultz later noted, "Once again, the signal was being sent to the world that if the United States took on this responsibility, Congress, the press, and the public would probably seek to compel us to pull back at the first sign of danger to our forces. Under those circumstances, other countries did not want to be associated with our effort."[44]

Reagan stayed the course in the face of determined opposition. (At one point one hundred and ten members of Congress brought suit against him to force him to initiate War Powers procedures.) Other countries, impressed by Reagan's willingness to lead, eventually joined the effort to keep the Persian Gulf open to shipping.

* * *

Ronald Reagan made his share of foreign policy mistakes—in Lebanon, for example, and in South Africa, where he underestimated the ability of that country to make a peaceful transition from an all-white government to black majority rule. His well-documented detachment and reluctance to discipline subordinates led to frequent infighting within his administration that produced an image of untidiness and of an absentee commander-in-chief.

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[40]Quoted in Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, p. 686.

[41]Scott Sullivan, "Why Europe is Angry", *Newsweek*, April 28, 1986, p. 34.

[42]Quoted in *Newsweek*, April 28, 1986, p. 15.

[43]Quoted in *Editorials on File*, 1987 (New York: Facts on File, 1987), p. 570.

[44]Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph*, p. 927.

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Nonetheless, Reagan's foreign policy was overall a resounding success. However much weight one attaches to other factors, it is incontrovertible that his policy contributed substantially to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. (Certainly many well informed former senior officials of the Soviet Union have no doubt on that score.) Beyond that, Ronald Reagan went far to lay the ghost of Vietnam to rest and to restore the use of military force as an available option for his country. His successor inherited a nation more confident in itself than it had been for a generation, and whose primacy as a world power was unchallenged.

All this was achieved in the teeth of the intense hostility and scathing contempt of a large part of the American elite. Because of that, it has been difficult for the liberal establishment to acknowledge the magnitude of Reagan's achievements and to give him his due, for that would involve both coming to terms with their own utter misreading of very recent events, and engaging in a serious re-evaluation of beliefs and attitudes about how the world works to which they still cling.

As well as being successful, Reagan's foreign policy was also marked by its courage. It is, indeed, ironic that a presidency often derided at the time as based on an excessive reliance on public opinion polls should in fact have consistently pursued controversial and initially unpopular policies. Perhaps the most important lesson of the Reagan years is that, as far as foreign policy is concerned, a firm grip on a few central truths and the determination to act on them are worth more than a great deal of sophistication and feigned high-mindedness. □

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Ortega and the Myth of the Mass

Neil McInnes

WHEN H.G. WELLS published *The Shape of Things to Come* in 1933 he dedicated it to "José Ortega y Gasset, Explorador." Wells had been an explorer of that other country, the future, since *The Time Machine* in 1895, and more seriously since *Anticipations* in 1901, and he recognized a kindred speculator in Ortega, whose *Revolt of the Masses*[1] had appeared in English translation the year before.

The future that was forecast there would not have surprised Wells in his more somber moments. Europe, said Ortega, was "suffering from the greatest crisis that can afflict peoples, nations and civilizations", namely "the accession of the masses to complete social power." He explained, with "a shudder of horror" (Ortega's colorful Castilian can sound embarrassingly overdone in English): "The element of terror in the destiny of our time is furnished by the overwhelming and violent moral upheaval of the masses; imposing, invincible and treacherous, as is destiny in every case." And he prophesied: "If that human type [mass-man] continues to be master in Europe, thirty years will suffice to send our continent back to barbarism."

Wells, who could be quite bloodthirsty about what should be done with populations surplus to his requirements, would have relished another prophecy in an earlier work of Ortega's: before things could get better, the masses must fail completely in their audacious attempt to rule society, "so that they may learn in their own lacerated flesh that which they do not wish to hear"; only then would their hatred of their betters be exhausted, and the mass and the select minority would once again be integrated into a functioning society.

Looking back, many are inclined to give Ortega credit for prescience that he does not deserve. It is quite true that in his 1930 Spanish text he pointed to the mass movements of fascism, Bolshevism, and Nazism to prove his point about a revolt against civilization, and true that these movements went on to send Europe back to barbarism. True, too, that his own country, which he scorned as a "pueblo" nation, a land without elites, would soon sink into atrocious confusion followed by nearly forty years of dictatorship. But none of these things happened for the reasons Ortega imagined; and even when he was right about European mass movements, he was fixed on the least important things about them, things they shared with social movements elsewhere that evolved quite differently. Worse than that, several of the most disastrous of the mass movements he identified (notably Nazism) were fed by ideologies to which Ortega was sympathetic, ideas he

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[1]Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1994).

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caressed while calling to have mass-man put back in his place. All the more curious, then, that his book should have had, after a sensational success in the 1930s, a long history of sustained interest on the right as well as on the left, among the intellectuals as well as, *mirabile dictu*, among the masses.

That latter paradox is worth considering. By his own super-elitist standards, a philosophical essay that begins life in a mass-circulation Madrid daily newspaper and then becomes a bestselling book must be suspect. And if it denounces the masses, how is it that so many of them buy it? Do they enjoy being insulted, or is it rather that each reader approves while making the reservation that he is not part of the masses? Adding up all these reservations we get the conclusion that, however many approve, no one believes it. Horkheimer and Adorno (in their *Soziologische Exkurse*) tell an apposite Teutonic joke:

> A huge political demonstration, the terrace packed full to the very last place, an enormous carpet of men and faces right up to the top, the orator in full flight. He cries, "The cause of all that's wrong is massification." Hurricane of applause.

So if no one thinks he is mass-man, do we have to believe philosophers and sociologists who talk about the masses? As I hope to show, that was a question Ortega's book helped bring to a head and, after thirty years' debate, to a conclusion.

First, though, what was the vantage point from which Ortega y Gasset made his observations? Madrid, where he was born in 1883 into an influential publishing family, was hardly the best place to study the modern masses (although its urban hypertrophy had been swift and devastating). After a first degree in Madrid, Ortega had spent five years in universities in Berlin, Leipzig, and Marburg, emerging a disciple of the neo-Kantian philosopher, Hermann Cohen. He returned to Spain to found the *Revista de Occidente*, a magazine and publishing house that set out to "level the Pyrénées", that is, to bring Spain into the modern European, especially German, cultural sphere. That sounds ambitious, and it was even harder than it sounds, but eventually it was accomplished and Ortega was the pioneer. It meant, firstly, working from the University of Madrid chair in Metaphysics (which he held until the Civil War in 1936) to naturalize philosophy in a land that had for centuries rejected it as either a foreign affectation or a threat to religion and good order. Secondly, it meant creating in Castilian a philosophical style and a technical vocabulary that were quite lacking. In this, Ortega succeeded magnificently, inventing a bold masculine prose iridescent with striking metaphor (while sometimes settling for literary brilliance where argument was needed).

Ortega gave the neo-Kantianism he learned in Germany a curious *hidalgo* twist. Principles imposed by the mind, he agreed, must everywhere overrule empirical intuition. But that required mental effort, which most people shirked, lazily remaining content with "sensualism" (as Ortega called reliance on the senses) and "common sense", that is, vulgar prejudice. Empiricism was the archetypal mob belief; it was "idiot", "plebeian", "demagogic", "the criteriology of Sancho Panza." He declared: "Faith in the senses is a traditional dogma, a public institution established by the irresponsible and anonymous opinion of the People, the collectivity." In contrast, philosophy, science, and mathematics are imposed on the given by energetic, aristocratic intellectual elites. He pushed this so far as to aver that logic itself and all science were games played under strict but arbitrary rules by a minority seeking to escape from the tedium and deadly seriousness of popular beliefs. Therefore Ortega's anti-egalitarianism was not political (he dismissed politics as "that second-class occupation") but cultural, philosophic, and even (oh paradox!) logical.

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WHAT ORTEGA SAID (with more care for rhetorical effect than for consistent argument) was that masses of average people had taken power, not only in politics but in matters intellectual, moral, religious, and economic, including all collective habits such as dress and amusements. This phenomenon had political, psychological, and cultural aspects. In politics, the attempt by the unqualified and incompetent to rule without the leadership of the select minority would lead to a political disaster, beginning with "direct action" in fascist style and ending with the use of an oppressive and violent state machine to crush the independence of individuals and groups.

Psychologically, the event was marked by the appearance of mass-man, half spoiled child and half barbarian, content to be like everyone else, envious of his betters and ignorant of what he owed to them, ungrateful, complacent, capricious, lazy, obsessed with politics, vulgar—the epithets pile up, not all of them mutually compatible. The main point was that the masses were loathsome not just in and because of their numbers; one specimen was enough to show what was wrong with them all, and Ortega could recognize him at first glance. The masses had been around in the plural since St. Augustine's *massa perditionis* but individual mass-man, *el hombre masa*, Ortega claimed as a discovery. Finally, the cultural revolt meant the end of high culture, the rejection of all standards of excellence and rationality in favor of caprice, sentimentality, human interest, and vulgarity. Quite flatly, culture could not work on a mass basis.

The tone was shrill, and it got worse. In 1937 Ortega added a "Prólogo para Franceses" in which, curiously, he did not even mention Nazism while complaining that mass-man had created "a stifling monotony" all over the continent, converting Europe into an ant-hill, an overcrowded prison, because of mass-man's vulgarity and soullessness. Congratulating himself on the anti-Americanism of his 1930 text, he scoffed at the idea that America, that "paradise of the masses", could ever succor Europe. The only external event that might stimulate Europeans to something worthwhile, like European union, would be "a Chinaman's pigtail appearing over the Urals or a tremor of the great Islamic magma." Or maybe it would all end in a gigantic famine after which, he added in a sinister Hitlerite note, "*Quedarian muchos menos hombres, que lo serian un poco mas*" (There would be many fewer men left, but they would be a bit more like men) (*Obras Completas IV, pp. 113-9*).

The Educated Mass-Man

GRIM WARNINGS about what came to be called (after Karl Mannheim) "mass society" go back to J.S. Mill and Tocqueville (dubbed by J.P. Mayer the "Prophet of the Mass Age"). Denunciations of what came to be called "mass culture" go back much further, to Juvenal (*panem et circenses*) and Horace (*Odi profanum vulgus et arceo*). So Ortega was not innovating there. His supposed natural law of oligarchy—that only elites can rule—had been familiar since Pareto and Mosca, but the two Italians had been interested only in the elites, not the masses. For them, the mass was defined negatively; it lacked wealth or education or military skill or whatever it was the elite had and used to hold power. Le Bon had studied the psychology of *la foule*, but a crowd is an event, whereas the mass is a perduring category, and to transfer the apocalyptic views of Le Bon from crowds to masses gave absurd results; which did not prevent Freud following Le Bon uncritically in *Massenpsychologie und Ichanalyse* (Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego).

Gabriel Tarde had seen the difference and invented the notion of "publics", that is the "crowd" that reads a mass-circulation paper but never meets, a notion that later founded the study of mass communications. So Ortega could claim originality in trying to develop a psychology of the members of social masses, to study their tastes and opinions. Moreover, his colorful and somewhat arbitrary account of that mentality contained an unexpected element that changed the direction of the whole discussion. *He said that mass-man at his crassest, most*

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ignorant, and dangerous could nevertheless be highly educated.

Compare that thought with the description of the mass outbreaks that terrorized the English gentry given in the essay "The Many-headed Monster", in Christopher Hill's *Change and Continuity in Seventeenth Century England.* The mobs that were a menace to society were held to consist of ignorant brutes, unruly clowns, enraged beasts. Updated from age to age, that was the commonly assumed view of the threatening masses that persisted down to *les classes dangereuses* of the nineteenth century. Ortega helped change that. He not only saw that (in John Carey's words), "The difference between the nineteenth century mob and the twentieth century mass is literacy." He went further and specified that teachers, doctors, scientists, financiers, and all manner of specialists could clump together into a dangerous asocial mass that could destroy a polity and debase a culture. François Furet lately recalled the newness of Ortega's thought at the time, saying in *Le passé d'une illusion* (1995), "The new thing . . . is the discovery that this 'man of the masses' is not, or not necessarily, an illiterate and uneducated person." Ortega had seen educated northern Italy fall for Mussolini and the most cultivated nation in Europe was falling for Hitler. "So fascism finds its cradle not in archaic societies but in modern ones. . . ."

Nietzsche had reported that even philosophers could today have plebeian souls, so that there exist civilized barbarians and educated philistines. But Ortega was the first to advance the notion that "the most immediate cause of European demoralization . . . this rebirth of primitivism and barbarism" lay not in the restive rabble or delirious crowds or toiling masses but in the ignorant presumption of educated specialists, particularly scientists and technicians. If true, it would be a despairing thought. We would no longer have Matthew Arnold's dichotomy of culture and anarchy, but a culture that *produced* anarchy, a headlong rush into cultural decadence and political disaster led by learned ignoramuses with the souls of mass-men.[2]

Despairing or not, it is a notion that has become current coin, as witness two recent books out of Germany. Peter Schneider, a leader of the 1968 Berlin student movement who has become *très assagi*, uses precisely Ortega's language, in his *Vom Ende der Gewissheit* (Berlin, 1994), to denounce the rebirth of barbarism in present-day Germany, and notably the fact that the children of educated middle class families are "like little beasts, dehumanized, or rather they never were human." Hans Magnus Enzensberger, in his *Civil War* (London, 1994), uses similar terms to describe the spread of thuggery in a prosperous educated society and calls for an effort to stop the rebirth of German barbarism, unless we have "an excessive taste for continuity", that is, unless we want to go back to the situation Ortega was describing in 1930. It is another matter whether what he was seeing was mass-man in action, but at least events since that date incline us all to accept as readily as Schneider or Enzensberger Ortega's point that cultured society can produce barbarity.

He offered that thought just when the notion of the threatening masses, as inherited from the nineteenth century, was in need of serious revision. By 1930 it was clear that the proletariat had shrunk to a (sizable) minority in Western societies and there was less prospect of a working class revolution than of a classless fascist takeover. So, says Salvador Giner in *Mass Society* (1976)[3], Ortega accomplished the necessary revision by transferring prevailing notions about the lower classes to the newly emergent middle class of educated specialists and linking them to totalitarian movements. That is why, Patrick Brantlinger says, "*The Revolt of the Masses* is a sort of *Communist Manifesto* in reverse. . . . The uprising of Ortega's mass nobodies . . . spells the demise of Marxist hopes for a proletarian revolution." It would turn out

[2]Patrick Brantlinger, *Bread and Circuses: Theories of Mass Culture as Social Decay* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983).

[3]Salvador Giner, *Mass Society* (New York: Academic Press, 1976).

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to be as unreliable a guide to the future as the *Manifesto*, but at least it was decked out in up-to-date dress.

Indeed, many of its ideas had been in the air. What Heidegger in *Sein und Zeit* (1927) had called inauthentic life, the world of *das Man*, sounded like Ortega's mass-man, whose thinking (or inability to think) showed the features of what Lukacs and the Marxists were calling "reification." Wyndham Lewis, in *The Art of Being Ruled* (1926), had included the scientists in the scorned masses. *The Revolt* appeared at the same time as F.R. Leavis' *Mass Civilization and Minority Culture*, which argued that the mass media had brought about "an overthrow of standards" and that "the intellectual and artistic minority was cut off as never before from the powers that rule the world", precisely Ortega's theme. There was in some parts of the intelligentsia a panic fear of the masses, which stimulated an interest in eugenics that the Nazis would have approved. D.H. Lawrence was hoping that the masses would "fall into death in millions", and Aldous Huxley decreed in 1934, "Universal education has created an immense class of what I may call the New Stupid."

Such a climate guaranteed an enthusiastic reception for *The Revolt*. It was eventually translated into more than a dozen languages and was a minor bestseller in the United States and Germany through the 1930s. Its argument for meritocracy and condemnation of collectivism help explain its U.S. success, but its popularity in Germany both before and under Nazi rule is interesting. Favor with a mass audience should have dismayed Ortega but, instead, he boasted he was the most widely read contemporary philosopher. The *Atlantic Monthly* maintained that, "What Rousseau's *Contrat Social* was for the eighteenth century and Karl Marx's *Das Kapital* was for the nineteenth, *Revolt of the Masses* should be for the twentieth century." This was patently absurd but that has not stopped Norton and Company reproducing that claim on the cover of their 1993 re-issue of the English translation, first published in 1932. Not only do re-issues continue (numbering in the twenties and thirties in various languages) but a new translation, with a prologue by Saul Bellow, appeared in the United States in 1985. The communists had no use for Ortega, whom their *Lexikon A-Z in einem Band* (Leipzig, 1955) dismissed as "an extreme reactionary and individualist philosopher." But most other shades of opinion, from liberal to fascist, found something sympathetic in this ambiguous and basically confused book.

The tradition in which Ortega's book is inscribed, and within which we might seek its influence, is twofold: the sociological theory that there is such a thing as "mass society", on the one hand; and on the other, the study of "mass culture", the joint consequence of universal education and the large-scale reproduction and circulation of cultural materials.

The Homogenized Society

THE THEORY OF mass society holds that, whereas earlier societies were internally diversified, industrial democracies have eradicated the elements of diversity as incompatible with political equality and economic efficiency. This homogenization of society has destroyed much that was old and precious (if not sacred) in social intercourse, leaving individuals identical but "atomized", lonely, separated, and self-satisfied in a moral desert, vulnerable to regimentation by bureaucracies. A corollary, associated with Hannah Arendt, is that masses of such individuals can seek refuge in ideological fanaticism, turning from the old political parties to totalitarian movements that promise something better than moral apathy and secular disbelief.

Thus the theory is offered as an explanation of the major political events of the twentieth century, as well as an account of its social life, the world of mass-man, alienated, unfree, resentful, and manipulated. There are countless variations on this theme, which, as Giner said, is too "loose and unfalsifiable" to deserve the name of theory, too much colored by the pathos of cultural pessimism to serve in analysis and explanation. That did not prevent the theory of mass society from being, as Daniel Bell said in

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1956, the most powerful idea in the Western world after Marxism; and in 1962 Edward Shils described it as the specter that was haunting sociology.

Ortega eloquently brought together many threads of this sociological figment as they existed in 1930 but it cannot be said that he contributed much to its further development—except his captivating title, for sundry later authors had a chapter or section called "the revolt of the masses" or played with variations such as "the revolt from the masses" (Bachrach), the "rape of the masses" (Chakhotin), "the revolt against the elite" (Viereck), or the "revolt of the elites" (Lasch) and so on. (In the muddle ground between ideology and reason, a striking title and an ambiguous theme can go a long way.) Karl Jaspers was writing his *Man in the Modern Age* (1931) at the time of Ortega's success, and since he argued there that the issue of the day was the struggle of selfhood against the mass order, he hailed *The Revolt*, and continued to cite it in later works. Gabriel Marcel, the Catholic existentialist, acknowledged a debt to Ortega in his book variously translated as *Men Against Humanity* and *Man Against Mass Society*, and he showed that a French Christian could be as tough-minded as a Spanish atheist by declaring that the mass was "a degraded state of the human", beyond true education, capable only of being trained, like animals.

Karl Mannheim did more than anyone to spread the idea of the "mass society", starting with *Man and Society in the Age of Reconstruction*

Spoilt Children

. . . the common man, finding himself in a world so excellent, technically and socially, believes that it has been produced by nature and never thinks of the personal efforts of highly-endowed individuals which the creation of this new world presupposed. Still less will he admit the notion that all these facilities still require the support of certain difficult human virtues, the least failure of which would cause the rapid disappearance of the whole magnificent edifice. This leads us to note down in our psychological chart of the mass-man of today two fundamental traits: the free expansion of his vital desires, and therefore, of his personality; and his radical ingratitude toward all that has made possible the ease of his existence. These traits together make up the well-known psychology of the spoilt child. And in fact it would entail no error to use this psychology as a 'sight' through which to observe the soul of the masses today. Heir to an ample and generous past—generous both in ideals and activities—the new commonality has been spoiled by the world around it. To spoil means to put no limit on caprice, to give one the impression that everything is permitted to him and that he has no obligations. The young child exposed to this regime has no experience of his own limits. By reason of the removal of all external restraint, all clashing with other things, he comes actually to believe that he is the only one that exists, and gets used to not considering others, especially not considering them as superior to himself. This feeling of another's superiority could only be instilled into him by someone who, being stronger than he is, should force him to give up some desire, to restrict himself, to restrain himself. He would then have learned this fundamental discipline: 'Here I end and here begins another more powerful that I am. In the world, apparently there are two People: I myself and another superior to me.' The ordinary man of past times was daily taught this elemental wisdom by the world about him, because it was a world so rudely organized, that catastrophes were frequent, and there was nothing in it certain, abundant, stable. But the new masses find themselves in the presence of a prospect full of possibilities, and furthermore, quite secure, with everything ready to their hands, independent of any previous efforts on their part, just as we find the sun in the heavens without our hoisting it up on our shoulders.

—Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses*, 1932

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(1935). He acknowledged Ortega's precedence but Mannheim was too powerful a thinker to owe anything to him. He agreed that there had been a breakdown of previous communities or "primary groups" and this had left people vulnerable to bureaucracy, to social disorder, and ultimately to fascism. By the time Mannheim wrote *Diagnosis of our Time* (1943), he sought to distance himself from Ortega as a representative of an older elite that had been panicked into deserting modern society just because new groups claimed admission to civilization.

When Sigmund Neumann wrote his influential *Permanent Revolution* (1942) he said that events since Ortega's "timely and challenging book" had brought home to world statesmen and social scientists "this onslaught—the reality of the rising masses." By the time Walter Lippmann wrote *The Public Philosophy* (1956) he did not need to invoke Ortega's authority for what had by then become, for some people, a commonplace thought: "Where mass opinion dominates the government there is a morbid derangement of the true functions of power. The derangement brings about the enfeeblement, verging on paralysis, of the capacity to govern." By then, though, the concept of massification or enmassment or *Vermassung* was being challenged, and Wilhelm Röpke, who claimed to have invented *Vermassung* about 1938, said in his *Jenseits von Angebot und Nachfrage* in 1958 (which appeared as *A Humane Economy* in 1960): "Some smart-alecks nowadays pretend that all the fuss about mass and enmassment is a false alarm and that the disintegration of society described by these words is only a new, and anything but pathological, stage of cultural development." But, he protested, Ortega had been right in diagnosing a cultural crisis, and it was still "the central issue of our epoch."

The trouble was that the notion of mass society was becoming increasingly vague in the hands of famous but careless writers, while sociologists were having difficulty giving it a positive meaning. Albert Camus declared that Ortega was "the greatest of European writers after Nietzsche" but in *L'homme révolte* (1951) he said that mass society was not to be blamed on average men and women but on Caesarean empire-builders, against whom he hoped the masses would indeed revolt. So many deplorable but conflicting characteristics were being ascribed to mass-man that it became difficult to tell him apart from Horkheimer and Adorno's authoritarian personality and Marcuse's one-dimensional man.

Managers, specialists, middle-class executives, wage-earning workers, cadres of totalitarian movements were all being held up as the quintessential mass-man. Anthony Hartley said in *Encounter* in 1973 that both the bureaucrat and the hippie were mass-men. Giner observed that "Bestsellers such as Marcuse's *One Dimensional Man*, Mills's *White Collar* and Toffler's *Future Shock* (of diverse merit and scope) which are fully written within the theory of mass society tradition, may give an idea of the unabated and vast diffusion achieved by this conception throughout the twentieth century." Clearly, denunciation of the mass society was becoming the fashionable form of cultural pessimism, and Judith Shklar was right to be reminded by it of nineteenth-century Romantics moaning about the plight of individuality and originality in a vulgar society, with "masses" standing in for "average" and "Philistine."[4] Indeed, it seemed that even Albert Einstein was a mass-man *à ses heures perdues*: When Einstein ventured an opinion about the Spanish Civil War which Ortega thought ignorant, he held it up as typical of the "frivolity and irresponsibility" of European intellectuals that are prominent causes of "the present disorder" (*Obras* IV, p. 306).

If mass-man's features were thus becoming hazy, some thought to recognize him clearly in the rebellious students of the 1960s. Geoffrey Clive did, writing in *Daedalus* in 1974 that the universities by then perfectly illustrated Ortega's thesis "that in the twentieth century mediocrity encapsulated in mass culture reigns supreme."

[4]Judith Shklar, *After Utopia: The Decline of Political Faith* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957).

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That was so because, as Ortega had foretold,

> the cult of material success [and] the idolatry of immediate gratification transform much of higher education into a perpetual farce . . . students, often driven into an academic environment by false expectations of the college experience, comprise collectively a paradigm case of Ortega's mass-man inadvertently enveloped in disillusionment.

Many of their teachers were no better, Clive added:

> Often basically uncultivated and devoid of historical perspective, they sincerely confuse their folly with innovative programs and original ideas. Thus they reinforce Ortega's paradoxical critique of mass-man as being at once deficient in comprehensive culture and without competence in any special branch of culture.

So Ortega, Clive concludes, "hits the nail on the head when he diagnoses our ills as above all the products of towering and misappropriated self-love divorced from reverence for what over the centuries has been proven best for life and thought." One might only object that he had hit the wrong nail, since overcrowded campuses were hardly the same as mass society.

Meanwhile, sociologists failed to find mass society. The term betrayed an underestimation of the complexity and pluralism of modern societies. To be sure, some old primary groups waned but new ones arose, even in crowded urban areas, and in any case there were strong interpersonal relationships and daily commitments to provide a sense of belonging, social fellowship, personal expression, and satisfaction.[5] In an essay "America as a Mass Society: A Critique" (collected in *The End of Ideology*, 1960) Daniel Bell said:

> At this point it becomes quite apparent that such large-scale abstractions as 'the mass society', with the implicit diagnoses of social disorganization and decay that derive from them, are rather meaningless without standards of comparison. Social and cultural change is probably greater and more rapid today in the United States than in any other country, but the assumption that social disorder and anomie inevitably attend such change is not borne out in this case. . . . For these reasons the theory of mass society no longer serves as a description of Western society but as an ideology of romantic protest against contemporary life.

Robert Nisbet, in *Sociology as an Art Form* (Oxford University Press, 1976), agreed that the notion of atomized individuals loosened from the ties of kinship, religion, class, and neighborhood was a subjective one: "I think it would be difficult indeed to substantiate on any strictly quantitative and objective measurement the idea of the masses. . . ." Talcott Parsons was less charitable, dismissing the idea as "a figment of social romanticism, as elitist bias . . . or, more invidiously, as an ideological position congenial to *certain groups* of intellectuals." In reporting that 1960 observation, E.V. Walter added, in an article called "'Mass Society': the Late Stages of an Idea" in *Social Research* (1964), "At present the idea is more poetic than theoretical", but he thought it might nevertheless be useful as a myth, as a proto-scientific notion. Maybe, but his was the last article with "mass society" in its title to appear in *Social Research* for the past thirty-one years.

The Threat to High Culture

THE OTHER TRADITION in which *The Revolt of the Masses* belongs, and to which it made a more substantial contribution, is the denunciation of "mass culture", not only as inferior to high culture but as a real threat to it, if not to society itself. This thought can be traced back a long way, but for our television age the best place to start the story is May 14, 1842. That was the date of the first publication of *The Illustrated London News*, the pioneer of illustrated newspapers, in which pictures lightened those solid black columns of

[5] Sandor Halebsky, *Mass Society and Political Conflict* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

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type that made up newspapers before then, which had much discouraged the illiterate majority. The news-in-pictures idea has flourished ever since, down to *Life* magazine and the television. The innovation appalled that one-time enthusiast of liberty and now aging Tory, William Wordsworth, and he wrote a bad sonnet to deplore it, entitled "Illustrated Books and Newspapers" (no. XIV of *Poems of Sentiment and Reflection*):

> Discourse was deemed Man's noblest attribute,
> And written words the glory of his hand;
> Then followed Printing with enlarged command
> For thought—dominion vast and absolute
> For spreading truth, and making love expand.
> Now prose and verse sunk into disrepute
> Must lacquey a dumb Art that best can suit
> The taste of this once-intellectual Land.
> A backward movement surely have we here.
> From manhood—back to childhood; for the age—
> Back toward the caverned life's first rude career.
> Avaunt this vile abuse of pictured page!
> Must eyes be all in all, the tongue and ear
> Nothing? Heaven keep us from a lower stage!

So there you have it: if lots of people are going to get their news in pictures, then we all become children again, society goes back to the caves, and civilization regresses to a lower stage. If that sounds like a quaint piece of Victoriana, then listen to the contemporary Parisian pundit Jean Baudrillard standing in front of a television set tuned to CNN news and crying "Avaunt this vile abuse of pictured page!": TV news, he explains, blunts our sense and understanding; we thought East Europe was persecuted because it was denied the natural democratic right to news and information, "as if we were not ourselves hostage to a system every bit as terroristic as theirs: our unscrupulous news system." Now we are subjecting entire peoples, as they emerge from darkness that was violent and tyrannical, to "this modern tribunal of news and information-gathering which is assuming all the features of an Inquisition. For only information [the news] has sovereign rights, since it controls the right to existence." The news in pictures exemplifies "the triumphant illusionism of the world of communications, the whole ambiguity of mass culture, the confusion of ideologies, the stereotypes, the spectacle, the banality. . . ."[6] So Wordsworth was right: Putting the news in pictures for the benefit of the masses is as terroristic as Soviet domination.

These intemperate lamentations are the first and the latest links in a tradition that includes, prominently, Ortega's *Revolt*. He chimed in soon after Heidegger had declared in *Sein und Zeit* (section 27):

> In utilizing public means of transport or in making use of information services such as the newspaper, every Other is like the next. This Being-with-one-another dissolves one's own Dasein [existence] completely into the kind of Being of 'the Others', in such a way indeed that the Others, as distinguishable and explicit, vanish more and more. In this inconspicuousness and unascertainability, the real dictatorship of the 'they' is unfolded.

In case that was not perfectly clear, Heidegger was saying that every time you get on a bus or open a newspaper, you wipe out your selfhood and fall victim to the dictatorship of the masses—apparently even if the newspaper does not have pictures.

Ortega put this more accessibly, forcefully, and colorfully in "the classical intellectual account of the advent of mass culture in the early twentieth century" (Carey). He went beyond J.S. Mill who in 1859 had said in *On Liberty*, "The general tendency of things throughout the world is to render mediocrity the ascendant power among mankind. . . . At present individuals are lost in the crowd." He did so by insisting on the baleful influence of mass taste on the creativity proper to the select minority. Because the mass was vulgar and insolent, it dominated the age and instituted

[6]Jean Baudrillard, *The Illusion of the End* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994).

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the rule of barbarism over taste. This would have been difficult to prove (even supposing Ortega could ever be bothered with proofs of his utterances) because, although the mass production of kitsch and cheap entertainment is obvious, so is the unprecedented volume of output of high-culture materials, and it is often cross-subsidized, via record companies and publishing houses, by mass culture. Ortega could not foresee Marcuse's bizarre argument that when a classical work—say, Baudelaire's *Fleurs du mal*—is mass-produced in paperback, it ceases to be high art and becomes another instrument of repressive tolerance, because genuine art *must* be inaccessible to the masses. But Ortega came near, as when in *The Dehumanization of Art*, he approved contemporary abstract painting because the mass failed to understand it and left the elites to appreciate it undisturbed. Actually, Ortega did not particularly like it himself, but he rejoiced to see the sheep separated from the goats. Snobbery has rarely been more insolent.

His broadside against popular taste was welcomed by those artists and intellectuals who were engaged in Modernism's effort to bamboozle the common people. Johan Huizinga in *In the Shadow of Tomorrow* (1935) commended Ortega's diagnosis of the "puerilism" of the day, "that blend of adolescence and barbarity", the "worldwide bastardization of culture", "the entry of half-educated masses into the international traffic of the mind", and the links it all had with totalitarianism: "the spectacle of a society rapidly goose-stepping into helotry." Huizinga's contempt for his age persisted in *Homo Ludens* (1938). T.S. Eliot also was enthusiastic about Ortega; in the arbitrary game of ascribing sins to mass-man, Eliot threw in "the new paganism" (which would not have bothered Ortega), while deploring liberalism, which Ortega claimed to represent, for paving the way for fascism. Under their differences of temper and opinion, they were united only in the *Odi profanum vulgus*.

This whole story, in which Ortega's part was accessory, is best told in John Carey's magisterial *The Intellectuals and the Masses: Pride and Prejudice among the Literary Intelligentsia 1880-1939* (London, 1992). The first chapter is called "The Revolt of the Masses." He notes that when Geoffrey Grigson founded the periodical *New Verse* in 1933, the first number began with a salute to Ortega for describing the vulgarization of the arts produced by the revolt of the masses, and announced that the aim of the periodical was to let writers talk to each other free from the limitations of mass intelligence. Carey sees this as emblematic:

> [T]he principle around which modernist literature and culture fashioned themselves was the exclusion of the masses, the defeat of their power, the removal of their literacy, the denial of their humanity. What this intellectual effort failed to acknowledge was that the masses do not exist. . . .The metaphor of the mass serves the purposes of individual self-assertion because it turns other people into a conglomerate. It denies them the individuality which we ascribe to ourselves and to people we know.

Ortega and the Nazis

IF THE "MASS" concept served only the self-assertion of intellectuals, it would be pretty harmless. But it obviously can serve another purpose, as when Hitler said, "Russians exist only *en masse* and that explains their brutality"—the purpose, namely, of dehumanizing candidates for destruction. There is, in fact, a faint but disturbing aroma of authoritarianism, thinly disguised as cultural snobbery, about Ortega's whole theory of mass society. We do not have to go as far as George Lukacs when he judged Ortega (like Heidegger) guilty of preparing the Hitlerite ideology, of making a suitable atmosphere for fascism, with his anti-democratic, aristocratic philosophy of society. But his sympathies and his silences do attract attention to the seamier implications of mass-man theory. Now, this is odd, because it is precisely the exponents of mass society theory who claim (as Hannah Arendt did in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*) to have discovered one of the very causes of fas-

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cism. There is a chiasma of ideas here that would be interesting to dissect.

Ortega was capable of spurning the Nazis as vulgar and then embracing their pet theories. For example, in *The Revolt* he says that "the reality of history lies in biological power, in pure vitality, in what there is in man of cosmic energy, not identical with but related to the energy which agitates the sea, fecundates the beast, causes the tree to flower and the star to shine." Against that biological undertow, politics and culture are "the mere surface of history." Later he dismisses culture and nationality as secondary historical elements compared with "vitality." Moreover, this peculiar substance "vitality" seems to be what distinguishes the elites from the masses, and gives them their right to rule and to determine taste. He can give no better account of them than that they try harder, they do not spare themselves, whereas mass-man is lazy and unambitious.

But we are not told what they try harder at, what their policies are; remembering that Pareto said there was an elite in every calling, including among bank-robbers, we can see that this is not a theory to disturb Nazi "elites" any more than Heidegger's mysterious distinction between "authentic" and "inauthentic" life. Ortega was later to criticize Jean-Paul Sartre's *engagement* as "nihilistic" and an incitation to mindless activism, but it is only his enormous self-confidence that prevents him seeing that he does no better when he cheers on his faceless elites. This fatal vagueness is, of course, the nemesis of all elitist theory in politics, once it claims to say anything more than the banality that fewer people give orders than take them.

Patrick Brantlinger points out that after Ortega jettisons mass culture and then the scientific and technical elements of high culture, "there remains only a set of reactionary political attitudes" that are frequently difficult to distinguish from fascism. His politics "fails to transcend ideas and attitudes—nostalgia for lost authority, a loathing for the vulgar and common man, distrust of science and democratic procedures—compatible with the fascism he sees as one of the most tragic consequences of the revolt of the masses." That is, no doubt, why he was invited by José Antonio Prima de Rivera, founder of the Falange and son of the former dictator of Spain, to become the movement's intellectual leader. He refused, but then he despised all politics. (His son fought the civil war in the Nationalist army.)

Ortega got his higher education in Germany, and scholars have shown that German sources can be identified for most of his ideas (notably the American scholar Nelson Orringer in his *Ortega y sus fuentes germanicas*, Madrid, 1979). Certainly in writing *The Revolt* he was squarely in that tradition of conservative imperial Germany which held that the Teutonic soul was threatened by "Americanization", meaning Mammon, materialism, colossal machines, and mass society. Now this is one of those home-grown leather-breeches and rye-bread ideologies that fed directly into Nazism, as Fritz Stern showed in his classic study, *The Politics of Cultural Despair: A Study in the Rise of the Germanic Ideology* (1961). Nazism, he says, did not come from Versailles or Weimar—nor, we must now add, from mass-man either—but from supposed elites, educated people often in established positions, who were heirs to a century-old national frustration and galling cultural discontent, which inspired in them nationalist fantasies and the idealism of anti-modernity.

Forces of that sort were infinitely more important in Germany in 1930 than the developments that obsessed Ortega, such as the common people's challenge to the political and cultural dominance of their betters. That was going on everywhere, but the very societies where political equality and universal education were carried furthest, such as the United States, were the least tempted by totalitarianism (as Arendt admitted). The elaborate argument about how the modern world had atomized and leveled and isolated individuals into insolent mass-men who were about to seize power was just another variation of the anti-modernism it was called in to explain. □

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The Russian Boys and Their Last Poet

Dmitry Shlapentokh

THE RECENTLY deceased Joseph Brodsky was a man who overcame formidable obstacles on his way to becoming a great Russian poet and Nobel Laureate: lack of a formal education, harassment by the Soviet secret police, and, perhaps most formidable, exile to a foreign land. His land of residence became not the culturally sophisticated Europe to which Russians are intimately connected, but the United States, a country—according to the stereotype—of pragmatic and philistine money seekers.

Despite these odds, Brodsky established himself as one of the greatest contemporary poets. His professional achievements are remarkable, but they are not what make him unique; after all, quite a few authors, Russians included, have blossomed in exile. Many others, too, have mastered the language of their adopted country, Nabokov and Aldanov among them. It is, rather, another trait that sharply divides Brodsky from other Russian exiles—his persistent unwillingness to visit his native land. He refused to return for even a short visit, even when such a trip was easy after the regime that had banished him had fallen from power. Brodsky's rejection of even a temporary return was especially strange given that in his work he constantly brooded on the loneliness of exile. He implicitly compared himself to Ovid, the Roman poet whom the relentless Augustus sent away to a distant hinterland of empire.

Many Russian intellectuals used to put off leaving the country in Soviet times because of the famous "Russian nostalgia"—and the fact that Soviet authorities would never allow them to return to the motherland if they "defected." As a native of Russia, I can attest to the fact that this was not an empty threat. It would seem logical, then, that Brodsky would at least occasionally have longed to visit his home and the "Third Rome", Moscow. Yet he did not.

One could attempt to explain Brodsky's reluctance to return by his Jewishness. He was a Jew not in a religious but in an ethnic sense. It is nonetheless true that Jews regularly suffered ostracism and worse in Soviet Russia, and this is why the bitterness of so many Jewish émigrés is so deep that they have cut off all ties and emphasize that they are American or Israeli—not Russian. For them, the linguistic departure from Russian to English is a sign of belonging to the "higher" civilization of the West. The problem with this explanation is that none of this mentality could be found in Brodsky. While he had mastered the English language perfectly, and though he was a man of the world, more inspired by the images of European and world history than by those of his native

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Russia, he nevertheless retained a genuine love for Russia and its culture. His love was not the sort one sees in those many émigrés whose linguistic weakness is reflected in a cultural parochialism, and who belittle the culture of the adopted country as an act of psychological self-defense. Brodsky's love for Russia and its culture was free of all this—it was deep and it was real. The proof can be found in his poetry and public life *after* emigration.

Brodsky's poem on the death of Marshal Zhukov, the Russian World War II hero and military leader, for example, was one of the best poems on the war written by an author of the post-Second World War generation. After his emigration, too, Brodsky engaged in a polemic with the celebrated Czech dissident writer Milan Kundera, who had asserted that it was not only Russian political tradition but Russian culture that was responsible for the rise of the brutish communist regime and Soviet enslavement of the peoples of Eastern Europe. Whether Kundera was right is not the point here, which is Brodsky's response: He defended Russian culture for its universalist and humanist leanings.

So if Brodsky's attachment to Russian culture and Russia was unquestionable, why did he never return? The fate of another Russian Nobel Laureate, Alexander Solzhenitzyn, might provide a clue. After spending several years in America, Solzhenitzyn returned to Russia expecting to find a receptive audience for his work and views. The opposite happened. A television program he was involved in was canceled, but not for political reasons, even though he was highly critical of the present regime. It was canceled for lack of viewer interest. His books, too, have found few publishers and readers. Indeed, few Russians nowadays exhibit any interest in serious intellectual pursuits in general, and in literature in particular.

More than a century ago, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, whom both Brodsky and Solzhenitzyn regarded as one of the major manifestations of the Russian spirit, presented a striking picture of the Russian national character. He wrote in one of his novels of the "Russian boys" and the burning question of their lives. According to Dostoyevsky, these "Russian boys" might not have known each other before they met, say, in some dirty canteen, nor would they likely ever meet again afterward. But what would they discuss when they did meet? They would discuss the problem of the immortality of the soul, and those "who did not believe in God" would plunge into a discussion of socialism and the possibility of global changes that would make all humans happy. Dostoyevsky defined this as the "real Russian question." It was this spirituality and universalism, this genuine worship of a culture of the spirit, that marked Russian intellectual life from the time of Dostoyevsky to the time of Brodsky's youth, when "Russian boys" (and here ethnicity did not mean anything for, in this context, a "Jewish boy" could be a "Russian boy") still discussed the same questions and problems.

But today when the "Russian boys" meet, it is not in some cheap canteen, but in the expensive restaurants of Moscow and abroad. One can easily predict the topic of their conversations: how to change rubles into dollars or Swiss francs, or dollars into rubles, and then invest the money in some shady venture. How to launder this money to invest in real estate in Chicago, Paris, or Miami. These are the only "real Russian questions" these days. In such discourse the poet is a very marginal figure, more so in Moscow than even in Manhattan.

Most Russian intellectuals, both abroad and within, sense this pervasive corruption and despiritualization. Most of them rail at the Yeltsin regime, as if it were somehow responsible. They are different from Brodsky, for they believe that there is a remedy, somewhere or somehow, that will restore Russia to its spiritual splendor so that, once again, the poet and writer will be the focal point of society. But Brodsky, possibly because he was a Jew, did not buy this.

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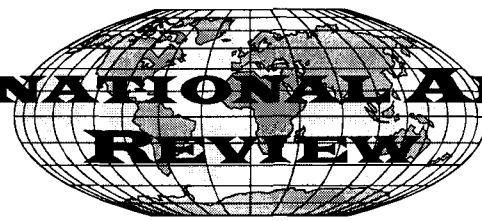
As with most Russian Jews, Brodsky was thoroughly Russified. Only the family name, facial features, and the stamp in his internal passport under the clause "nationality" (ethnicity) identified his Jewishness. But while he loved Russia and its culture, it was not always reciprocated. Many Russian nationalists reject the notion of him and other Jews as being part of the country and the culture. Indeed, they refer to him not as a Russian, but a "Russian speaking", poet.

Maybe they are right in the sense that Brodsky was never fully absorbed into Russian daily life and political play. This provided him with a sense of a detachment, and the ability to observe his surroundings with an unusual degree of impartiality. And he might well have come to the intuitive conclusion that the present despiritualization of Russian life, the loss of the centrality of poetry and writing intellectual discourse, represents not just a temporary and curable disease but a terminal condition.

Russia will most probably survive the social and political upheaval that has befallen it. The ruble will stabilize, industry will flourish, the living standard may even rise as high as the living standard of the advanced countries of the West. Even poor Russian science may be restored to its former glory. Yet the "Russian boys" who passionately discussed "immortality" and "socialism", the globalism and spiritual uplifting that made the poet, writer, and philosopher the center of national life, are probably gone forever. Those Russian writers, like Solzhenitsyn, who rush back to the country thinking that what they see is something that is temporarily sick, something they can help cure, will end up disappointed. Brodsky suffered from no such illusion. He knew that he would find only a corpse, the "dry bones" of a perished civilization. The old "Russian boys" were dead, and he loved them too much to see them in decay. This is why he never returned; he understood that for such a trip he would need not a Boeing 747, but a time machine. And only poetry can truly travel in time. □



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Thomas Mann and Germany's Demons

Anthony Hartley

Donald Prater, *Thomas Mann: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 592 pp., $35.00.

WAS THERE EVER a great writer whose relationship to his own country was as anguished as that of Thomas Mann with Germany? Dante, perhaps, who can be said to have made Italy, and who certainly made the Italian language. But Dante did not suffer Italy in the way that Mann suffered Germany. Mann's first great novel—*Buddenbrooks*—was subtitled "The Decadence of a Family" and recounted the downfall of that North German patriarchal bourgeoisie from which he came. In due course, his own life was to become the record of a similar collapse. His family life, so apparently ordered and set in its ways, such a model of German middle-class behavior, was to experience political exile, two suicides among the children, addiction to drugs, and the other dangerous pleasures of the Weimar Republic. Meanwhile, Mann himself ruthlessly sacrificed the happiness of everyone around him to his literary greatness, as he struggled to maintain that bourgeois model of comfortable living that provided the necessary framework for his own unremitting determination to write great books, live like a great man, and die as the most revered of German intellectual figures.

All this he achieved. There has hardly been a greater writer in the twentieth century than Thomas Mann. The only novelist who compares with him is Proust, who also perceived some of the dangerous fissures in a time that began with comfort, prosperity, and the prestige of great families. It was one of these fissures that swallowed up Imperial Germany, whose success between 1864 and 1914 had filled its functionaries with euphoria and the heads of its intellectuals with nonsense. After the disaster of the First World War, German life was permeated with the desire to avenge defeat and to assign blame for it. In the veins of the young Weimar Republic ran the venom of the *Dolchstoss*, or "stab in the back", legend and the resulting dissatisfaction with democracy was to leave the political field open to the National Socialists who led Germany into a catastrophe, compared to which everything that had gone before was as nothing.

Thomas Mann had seen—or perhaps one should say felt—what was coming. His sympathy for his country was such that, in his imagination, he could share even its sickness. *Dr. Faustus*, his last major novel, remains the best account of the insanity that overtook the German people: a fury of hatred, paranoia, xenophobia, and nihilism such as no other European country has undergone, and which, irrational as it was, is most convincingly explained by a kind of diabolical possession. Indeed, the demons only had to wait to come into their inheritance. Rationally, Golo Mann, in his history of nineteenth to twentieth century Germany, explains the success of National Socialism by the fact that it was the only new element in postwar German political life, untainted by the errors and miscalculations that had brought Germany to its defeat. But did the void have to be filled by quite as horrific an apparition?

After 1918 Germany's middle classes faced a generalized decline, of which *Buddenbrooks* was in a sense a prediction—a

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decline that was not simply bankruptcy and loss of money, but that represented the destruction of a way of life, the entry into a dark land where comfortingly traditional homes, family festivities, and regular holidays on the Baltic coast were no longer to be enjoyed. It is small wonder that they should have mistaken Hitler's "order" for the prospect of a restoration of all the things they had lost and which, they believed, could only be found again in a strong and proud Germany with a stable currency. It was their error (and misfortune) that they expected these bourgeois gifts from a failed painter, whose mind was anything but orderly, and who preferred a *Götterdämmerung* to a quiet and industrious life. The Buddenbrooks and their like were only to get what they wanted after the Second World War—from Konrad Adenauer, the first German chancellor to come from the upper middle class and who, as a Rhineländer, was not attracted by the Prussian military tradition and the romance of marching men.

IT IS UNDERSTANDABLE that Donald Prater, in his new biography of Mann, should have emphasized the novelist's political evolution, which was so closely associated with the history of Germany. This was perhaps the only possible approach if literary analysis is excluded, or at any rate relegated to a secondary level in the story. All else is the detail of the Mann family and their attachment to that comfortable standard of living that Mann needed to continue his work, which usually progressed at a snail's pace. To be told of the furniture in his study, or of the ginger biscuits and Earl Grey tea he consumed at four o'clock, may seem trivial until we realize that this was ritual required to enact the life of a great writer, a world figure, whose impressive facade must be served by a continuity of habits. Similarly, his somewhat ungrateful behavior to Agnes Meyer, the wealthy wife of the owner of the *Washington Post*, whose rather oppressive goodwill he came to find a bore after his installation in the United States, becomes more excusable if we consider that, in Mann's own eyes, his writing enjoyed an absolute importance that transcended personal relations.

Even his occasional excursions into homosexual love remained mostly platonic, and one has the impression that the importance he attached to them was because they expanded his experience and, hence, the materials available for his art to transform. Having noted that only once had he known the fulfillment of actually enfolding the beloved in his arms, Mann commented: "This is no doubt humanly fitting, and thanks to this normality I can regard my life as more integrated into the natural order of things than through marriage and children." Without some experience of satisfied passion, his writing might have been the poorer. As it was, even a single experience could be extrapolated. In *Death in Venice*, the destruction of Aschenbach through his surrender to the charms of the boy Tadzio shows how fully Mann realized the incompatibility of such transitory relationships with his own settled bourgeois life. Like many young men growing up, he had perceived sexuality as a threat. "How I hate this sexuality, which claims for itself everything that is beautiful. It is the poison that lurks in all beauty!" he wrote in a letter to a friend. The homo-eroticism, toward which Mann inclined and which led him to admire now a waiter, now the legs of a young tennis player, was anything but "gay", and the part it played in his life can hardly be taken as a manifesto in favor of any kind of "liberation." Like other elements, it is taken into his writing as an enrichment, but its influence seems to have stopped there. If his emotions were involved they could emerge freely in his work.

For one who lived such a literary life, Mann had surprisingly little interest in the literary movements of the Weimar Republic. Nothing could be less like his literary principles, than, for instance, the program set out in the Expressionist anthology *Menschheitsdämmerung* (The Twilight of Humanity), first published in 1920, whose

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commitment to a revolutionary view of the future had little in common with a writer whose intention was to continue in the line of the great German classic writers and whose style of life was avowedly middle-class. Mann succeeded in his aim of becoming a classic, whereas the young Expressionists, for all their talent, were destined to poverty and death in exile. They would have scorned his taste for order and the predictable rhythms of bourgeois existence; his Olympian reply was to ignore them.

But if Mann neglected the blood and fire of the Expressionists, he was deeply and consciously indebted to those great figures of the German past, whose successor he believed himself to be. Just as Konsul Buddenbrooks believed himself and his family to be linked together in a chain that united past, present, and future, imposing duties and standards of behavior on its members, so Mann saw himself as the final figure in the succession of German literature. It was natural, therefore, that he should devote his critical attention to those predecessors—the *Dichter* (a German word that carries the sense of seer and prophet as well as poet)—who had created German culture. His writing of novels was accompanied by a series of essays paying tribute to the cultural giants of the German past. Goethe, Schiller, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche—they are all there, along with many minor figures from whom can be extracted some lesson about German culture.

Also there are the great Russian novelists—Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky in particular—who could be compared with a Goethe or a Schiller. Mann's essay *Goethe and Tolstoy*, significantly subtitled "Fragments about the Problem of Humanity", is probably his greatest piece of literary criticism, revealing his own personality as much as those of the writers he was analyzing. His definition of Goethe and Tolstoy as "divine", as opposed to the merely "holy" qualification of Schiller and Dostoyevsky, showed clearly enough where he placed himself. For it was characteristic of the classical writers he admired that they struck those around them as awe-inspiring. Goethe has an angel looking out of one eye, said someone who had met him, a devil out of the other, and his speech is a deep irony on all human things. Tolstoy, according to Gorky, resembled "an old Russian god under a linden tree." Mann himself perhaps deserves the description once attached to Goethe—said to be "the most frightening"—"He is tolerant without being mild."

MANN'S CONSERVATISM, which he once described as "an erotic irony of the spirit", was based on traditional values rather than a carefully developed political system. It was made up of an accumulation of habits and traditions, all the more compelling because unconscious. At the heart of it all was the family. There is not much evidence that Mann loved his children, except perhaps Elizabeth, his last daughter. Indeed, there is a good deal of evidence to the contrary, though he found Erika helpful and Klaus handsome. Here again he approved of the *idea* of a family, and the rituals it brought with it, rather than its actual living representatives. To Katia, his wife, he showed gratitude for all she did for him and sometimes wondered how his work could continue if she were to die or fall ill.

Mann, indeed, attached more importance than many writers to the possession of a family home, a local habitation, and a name where he could find a base and give himself up to the quiet productive rhythms of his work. Here again he was a typical middle-class German. The concept of *Gemütlichkeit* (coziness), which has both a physical and a spiritual sense, is of importance in Central European life, being the opposite of the dangerous forests surrounding snug village houses. That is why the inflation after 1918 produced such a deep wound in the German psyche: it brought with it, for much of the middle classes, the destruction of homes and the loss of much loved objects, handed down over generations.

Mann shared such feelings. What he cared most about was his work, but that work had as its instrument the German language

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and often as its subject matter the history of twentieth-century Germany. Not that he set out with political aims. His beliefs concerning the relationship between art and politics are set out in his *Observations of an Unpolitical Man*, written to define his attitude to the First World War. "Art is a Conservative power, the strongest of all; it preserves spiritual possibilities, which without it—perhaps—would die out." And again: "For all Conservatism is anti-political, it does not believe in the political, only the progressive does that."

This is in the line of Goethe, whose indifference to politics, and above all to meliorist politics, is remarked on by Mann in his writings. The "erotic irony of the spirit" can hardly be used to support any moral or political opinion. Its function is rather to abolish them. Mann's conservatism was part of his skepticism over schemes of political improvement. Like Dr. Johnson, he was not impressed by them, and extremism of any kind was antipathetic to him. After defeat in the First World War, during which he had supported Imperial Germany at the cost of a famous and prolonged quarrel with his brother Heinrich, he became a supporter of the Weimar Republic. When that fell victim to the National Socialist coup, he left Germany as an exile. After 1945 he refused to choose between East and West Germany. Though he was no communist—a crude and obviously flawed political movement—he disliked the Cold War atmosphere that reigned in Bonn and in the United States, and also retained hopes for German reunification and something of the old Prussian tradition of balance between Russia and Western Europe.

After 1933, his reluctance to immediately enter the arena against the Nazis, which so disturbed Klaus and Erika, had as its motive the wish to see his books still circulate in Germany and be read by Germans. Mann saw his place in history as being at the end of a cultural chain that stretched from Luther to Nietzsche via Goethe. Because Germany had no history in the sense in which France and England possessed one, Germany had to look back on these monumental teachers of the past, whose position, accordingly, came to be quite different from that occupied by great French or English writers. Germany was not a nation-state in the sense that older European countries were. It was, as Mann wrote, a *Kulturstaat* held together by cultural ties. Admire as one might (and as Mann did) the work of Bismarck, it nonetheless remained an artificial construction. The real roots of Germany were to be found in a few great writers, philosophers, and musicians, exposure to whom linked the German people—perhaps, more especially the North Germans—in a common consciousness. It is, therefore, quite understandable that Mann should have been convinced of the supreme importance of his writings continuing to reach the German people. Only so could the values that he felt himself to represent be kept alive in their minds.

Yet despite Mann's rejection, in the 1920s and 1930s, of the vulgar *völkisch*, or populist, version of the German national destiny proffered by Hitler and other nationalists, such as those who assassinated Rathenau, there is little doubt that, for him too, Germany and German culture were "different" from those of other European states. He had claimed much for the old German Empire on the grounds of its cultural superiority—a superiority of which the Nazi regime was a betrayal. Mann felt that betrayal acutely, but it would be difficult to claim that he had any great confidence in democracy. His values were not legitimized by the counting of heads, nor was his idea of Germany based on electoral mandates. The ordinary operations of political democracy were simply irrelevant to the cultural criteria by which he judged countries.

The message that Mann imparted to his fellow countrymen was a lofty one, but it implied the existence of an elite through which German culture justified itself. The terrifying aloofness that he noted in Goethe's

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behavior was suitable for a *Dichter*, through whom the existence of Germany found its true meaning. Thus there was always a split in society between what might be called "the initiate" and the masses who dwelt outside the circle of meaningful culture. This was the weakness in Mann's conception of his country and countrymen (they were, indeed, countrymen and not exactly citizens). His protest against National Socialism was made in the name of cultural values against the crude and uncivilized beliefs that prevailed among doctrinaires of German nationalism and xenophobia. But such a protest could hardly have much impact, unless it were supported by a political conception that could make a forceful appeal to the German people as a whole. A *Kulturstaat* was not such a conception. It envisioned a community, the majority of whose population were in the very nature of things excluded from any very active participation in deciding how it should be governed. It was appropriate that Mann's best known attack on the Third Reich should have been addressed to the dean of the faculty of philosophy of Bonn University, which had recently deprived him of his honorary doctorate. This famous pamphlet was published at the time of the entry into the Rhineland, when German nationalism was enflamed by the recuperation of the "German Rhine" and Hitler found a new popularity.

Against a background of gun carriages rattling through a beflagged Cologne, Mann's voice could hardly make itself heard inside Germany. It was abroad that its impact was felt. In the United States, above all, he helped to reveal the real nature of the National Socialist regime. His audience was not a political one, and his message was directed to the same students and professors who had thronged to his lectures in Germany. But it could not counter this new party that swept over Germany like a flame, fanned by new types of manipulation invented by Josef Goebbels.

THOMAS MANN certainly knew the errors and the weaknesses of Germany's educated classes. At the end of *Dr. Faustus*, during the terrible collapse of the hero into paralysis and madness—or, to put it another way, his surrender to the demons that have taken over his personality, paralleling the fate of Germany—an offended guest leaves the room with the remark, "This man is insane. There can be no doubt about it, and it is a great pity that, in our circle, neurological science is not represented. As a numismatologist, I feel myself quite incompetent here."

This is an acid criticism of the moral neutrality observed by the German professional classes, who continued to maintain a narrow definition of professional duty that excluded issues outside their immediate interests. This restricted view of duty enabled them to continue carrying on their occupations as lawyers, doctors, and civil servants without paying any attention to the wider implications of the work. This disinclination to inquire too closely into the general moral consequences of policies was one of the elements that helped to undermine the Weimar Republic. The phrase "*Dienst ist Dienst*" ("Duty is duty") imposes a frontier that the consciences of those engaged in public service cannot cross. It leaves certain moral areas of discussion with the notice "Entry Forbidden" as a warning to civil servants who may be rash enough to trespass on them. This forbidding sign was as clearly displayed over the approaches to certain types of discussion as it was to be later over land sequestered for use as a concentration camp.

Indeed, sometimes it was the very professionalism of this class that attracted them to the Nazi movement. Albert Speer, for example, put down his own adhesion to National Socialism to the fascination of Hitler's personality, but there was more to it than that. As an architect, he had found a fascinating client, whose ambitious plans and capacity to have them realized offered him opportunities that would never otherwise have

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come his way. Once again, the implications of such service were ignored—finally to the point of turning a blind eye to the death of thousands of slave workers during the building of the secret weapons that were intended to win the war. Similarly, officers of the Wehrmacht, faced by the moral difficulties posed by the actions of the National Socialist regime (the order for the killing of Communist Party members in Russia and others), chose—of all issues!—to worry about the oath they had sworn to Hitler.

From this initial hesitation stemmed their helplessness when National Socialism began to threaten their caste. By 1939 the leaders of the Wehrmacht, the heads of German industry, the judges, the diplomats, the businessmen, the economic experts—all were pursuing their tasks regardless of the long-term consequences. There they were, drawing up accurate and effective strategic plans of aggression against possible enemies, inventing new weapons, multiplying them by the most efficient systems of production, using the cunning of a deceitful diplomacy and the threats of a propaganda machine in advance of its time to overcome their adversaries, and yet it hardly seems to have occurred to these engineers, financiers, technocrats, and men of science that they were running the risk of a failure that would be visited on their own heads. By 1945 many of them were dead, killed by the demon they had helped to conjure up, and Germany lay in ruins around them.

Likewise, by the end of August 1914, von Moltke, the commander of the western German armies, was writing to his wife that the War was already lost. Yet the German general staff had been planning it for years and was willing to accept the Schlieffen Plan, with its thrust through neutral Belgium which eventually brought Great Britain into the war on France's side. And when the British declaration of war was announced to the German cabinet by the chancellor, Bethmann-Hollweg, it was Tirpitz who cried out, "Then all is lost"—Tirpitz who for decades had done so much to poison relations between Britain and Germany by his plans to build a high seas fleet. For a moment—but only for a moment—these experts perceived the consequences of their actions and were terrified by them. Hitler's generals, we know, secretly felt such qualms as well, but, after the early victories in the field, hardly dared to express them.

Elsewhere in *Dr. Faustus* there is a significant exchange between an anonymous student and the narrator, Dr. Serenus Zeitblom. The student describes the multiple and contradictory trends in German culture. "A rich people", comments Zeitblom. But the student retorts: "A confused people . . . and bewildering for the others." Was that Mann's final verdict on his compatriots? For the very richness of their culture—the multiple possibilities and ambiguities that it allows—certainly carries confusion into its interpretation by others. At present, neither an Englishman nor a Frenchman can have much certainty as to the direction in which a newly reunited Germany will jump. The lack of clarity of German culture, its essential ethical neutrality, is reproduced in political behavior that is hard to reduce to moral categories.

TAKE, FOR EXAMPLE, Germany's current devotion to the European idea. From its very inception this has had as its objective, in the eyes of its German supporters, the enabling of Germany to re-enter the comity of nations. Europe, as Adenauer wrote to Erhard, was the one means through which Germany could again have a foreign policy, escaping from the trauma of National Socialism. But if the formation of the new Europe were carried out according to past German plans—the ideas conceived earlier by Rathenau or Stresemann—then such a policy would certainly extend well beyond Adenauer's concept of a Germany again taking its equal place among other European nations. For a united Germany, present once again among European policymakers, would be far stronger than its fellows both in terms of economic capacity and of the size of its population. The question is whether such a

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Germany's determination to involve itself in a web of binding European regulations and legal restrictions should be interpreted as a means of depriving itself of the ability to wield unchecked power over others—or as a means of gaining such power without appearing to do so.

To answer such a question requires a reliable interpretation of German motives. Yet there is no means of arriving at any such certainty. Germany possessed, almost accidentally, of great geopolitical power, is offering its companions in the European adventure something that might turn out to be either an embrace or a stranglehold. Mann himself, in his attitude toward post-World War II Germany, reflected this indeterminacy. "If only, as when Hitler was flourishing, one knew to which side one belonged", he wrote to a friend in 1951, "communism with its infantile amoralism is impossible, but so is any belief in the future of this corrupt, condemned, late-capitalistic world of profit." A refusal to accept either American or Russian ideology was accompanied by a refusal to abandon either East or West Germany or the hope for their reunification. This was the attitude of a Prussian conservative, with its traditional leaning toward Russia and its distaste for modern industrialism, which was no longer the mercantilism of the Buddenbrooks. Mann's conservatism was a *controlled* conservatism, moderated by tradition and kept far away from populism. It was the conservatism of an ordered form of life that Mann himself practiced until his death. It lay as far from National Socialism as it did from communism.

Germany today has rebuilt its stocks of *Gemütlichkeit*. But its tranquillity would be deeply disturbed were the prospect of losing what has been regained once again to threaten the middle class. Similarly, while "race" is a forbidden word in Germany today, the prospect of being swamped by refugees or immigrants would produce unpredictable reactions in those who regard nationality by blood as the only title to the German name. The German state has been willing to pay out considerable sums of money to repatriate the remnants of those German communities that once peopled Eastern Europe (it used to be said that anyone driving an ox cart from Vienna to Constantinople could stay in a German village each night). Now even the Volga Germans are being brought back to Germany. However, immigrant workers from Turkey, the Middle East, and Africa can acquire German nationality only with difficulty and are given no political rights. Thus there are still areas of exclusion in German life, despite the terrible past, which, one might have thought, had ruled out such feelings forever.

Mann, in his life and writings, represented that older Germany, whose tribal coziness and stock of common habits he found comforting. The question is how such a local Germany can fit into a more mobile and more cosmopolitan world. To return once more to the future of Germany in Europe, will this local Germany not dislike having to bring its habits into line with those of its neighbors? Will it not prefer to lead others into its own ways? If Chancellor Kohl is eager to unite European currencies into one monetary system, is this not because the mark is Germany's strongest card in Europe? To play that card is to have a strong possibility of getting one's own way. To play it without effect would mean a bitter loss of prestige. Thus the question of monetary union has now become primarily a political question, but one which masks a more fundamental cultural uncertainty.

Count Keyserling, in his book *Europe*, describes the "fundamental characteristic" of the German as being his "lack of realism."[1] This defect, which has brought with it defeat in two great wars, could be remedied by an application of Mann's "erotic irony of the spirit." Indeed, the ironist would hardly expect any far-reaching political project to suc-

[1]Hermann Keyserling, *Europe*, trans. Maurice Samuel (New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1928).

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ceed. The possibility, at least, of failure must hover over it. The question is how will that affect the German mind? Disappointment there will be if European plans do not meet with the anticipated success, but does that imply another Armageddon? Perhaps Germans will care more for their restored *Gemütlichkeit* than for the exact shape of a future Europe. They would be wise, anyhow, to remember Keyserling's analysis of their weakness and to avoid upsetting themselves over ambitious schemes. After all, with a reunited Germany, they can settle comfortably into their middle-class existence. With the capital moving to Berlin and the eastern provinces once again playing their full part, they have enough challenges to meet without taking on too many others.

Germany still retains the indetermination that Mann saw in it. Behind it looms the ambivalence of German culture. Within is the past fissure between East and West, between Protestant and Catholic. These are all matters to be regarded with that "erotic irony of the spirit" that Mann recommended, and whose quieting effect may calm the turbulence and confusion of the German spirit. No wonder that *Dr. Faustus* closed with a prayer: "May God be merciful to your poor souls, my friend, my fatherland." □

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Road Hogs

Adam Garfinkle

Joshua Muravchik, *The Imperative of American Leadership* (Washington, DC: AEI Press, 1996), 261 pp., $24.95.

Eric A. Nordlinger, *Isolationism Reconfigured: American Foreign Policy for a New Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 335 pp., $29.95.

Peter W. Rodman, *America Adrift: A Strategic Assessment* (Washington, DC: Nixon Center for Peace and Freedom, 1996), 89 pp., $6.95.

IF YOU DON'T know where you're going," said the Cheshire Cat to Alice, "almost any road will take you there." Undoubtedly, U.S. foreign policy is "on the road" after the Cold War, but there is, at best, imperfect agreement on which road it is or where it leads. Those sure of the way are suddenly encountering a lot of people named Alice, and the rest of us are checking our nametags.

A main purpose of *The National Interest* is to describe the map on which all such roads as we might traverse are laid out. Two of the books reviewed here describe how Joshua Muravchik and the late Eric Nordlinger read the map and would have us travel upon it. Both recommend sharp turns at high speeds. The third contains the counsel of Peter Rodman, a man less interested in deciphering maps than in plotting out fuel efficiencies and honing the fine points of safe highway travel.

* * *

Muravchik's *The Imperative of American Leadership* is muscular advocacy with a straightforward pitch: The world is a dangerous place, and if it is not to descend again into the sheol of chaos and war it needs a leader to keep the peace. Only the United States qualifies for that role, for we are grandly powerful, fundamentally benign, beset by few serious domestic problems, and endowed with virtually limitless resources, if only we will unbind them for proper use. So lead we must, even if

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it means spending and doing as much as we did during half a century of Cold War. More than that, the world wants U.S. leadership, particularly in light of the recent object lesson of its abdication—Bosnia. And still more, U.S. leadership would deepen the global appeal and rewards of democracy and free trade, the spread of which will structurally alter the international environment away from tyranny, war, and poverty.

Along the way to unfurling this argument, Muravchik makes many telling points, savaging European and U.S. policy in the Balkans, skillfully showing how the United Nations cannot successfully undertake peacemaking (as opposed to peacekeeping) operations, and brilliantly skewering West European pretensions to foreign policy coherence. He surgically distinguishes between America's exaggerated economic woes and its real, but self-inflicted, budgetary problems; there's a temperate argument for free trade, and a reasonable plea for higher levels of defense spending.

For those already aligned with Muravchik's general view, *The Imperative of American Leadership* will serve as an elixir. But not everyone shares it and that, as Muravchik sees it, is the problem: the near dominant power of American neo-isolationism, with its small-mindedness, budgetary pretexts, neomercantilist devilments, and false humilities. In his view, convince Americans that the United States must lead, and all will be well; reject that imperative and it will return to haunt us as it did in the late 1930s.

As might be deduced from this Manichaean formulation, Muravchik's typology is simple. Indeed, it bears but one axis: Wilsonians against Washingtonians. Wilsonians are far-sighted internationalists who know that working tirelessly to assure "milieu goals", and not just short-range "possession goals" (Arnold Wolfers' terms), is the best guarantee of peace; while Washingtonians define the national interest so narrowly, and with such truncated time horizons, that they invariably invite crisis. Thus, Muravchik argues, "the very dramatic contrast between the catastrophe that resulted from the Washingtonian approach after the First World War and the spectacular success of the Wilsonian approach after the second constitute [sic] a prima facie case for staying with the Wilsonian path as we search for a post-Cold War policy."

We expect a polemic to be sleek and simple, but excessive simplicity bears more vice than virtue. Like any vehicle with a single axis—or axle—Muravchik's is unstable, leading to wobbly definitions of Wilsonianism and Washingtonianism. Thus, gone from Wilsonianism is its focus on international organization, collective security, and disarmament—all "woolly headed notions"—which allows Muravchik to claim that victory in the Cold War was not a realists' victory but a Wilsonian one. Extraneous appellations are also added to Washingtonianism, whose realists are accused of believing according to a "contorted logic" that America is weaker after the end of the Cold War, and that "preventing wars is hopeless, so our goal must be to stay out of them." But true realists are not properly described by such broad brushings, and this gets to the main problem: Muravchik's formulation obscures key differences between realists and true isolationists.

Classic realists choose their diplomatic investments selectively, not out of a sense of weakness but from a calculation of interest and propitiousness. Muravchik leaves aside these distinctions not because he is disingenuous, but because he is such an unabashed American primacy maximalist—with the extra octane of pro-democracy idealism tossed in to boot—that such distinctions seem insignificant. "The Wilsonian alternative", he writes, "is not to wait for 'clear and present dangers' but to make *every effort* to defend the peace. Sometimes such a defense will entail political exertions to influence developments between *or within* nations. Sometimes it will entail military action to deter aggression or *to stop its development*" (emphases added). A more inclusive general rationale for using force against

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others is hard to imagine, and those who disagree are deemed not to be thinking differently but to have lost their nerve. To employ our map metaphor, Muravchik is a bit of a road hog.

It seems never to occur to Muravchik that problems can be created by doing too much as well as not enough, or that not everything that can go wrong in the world will go wrong. It never occurs that there are alternatives between doing everything and doing nothing. Witness this polar remark: "America carries so much weight that if we disengage, turmoil is certain, and that turmoil will eventually catch up with us"—as if actual disengagement were really an option, and as if there were no middle ground between Muravchik's souped-up maximalism and isolationism.

It follows that Muravchik marks the accumulating disasters of the 1930s as the best model for assaying how dangerous our world really is. But the problem in the interwar period was not the absence of American leadership, but the absence of America as any significant factor at all in the European or Asian balance of power. Virtually no serious analyst suggests the possibility, let alone the desirability, of an American disengagement approaching that of the 1930s. There is, after all, a great difference between the absence of American *leadership* and the absence of American *participation* in world politics.

Missing this distinction echoes the failure to distinguish between classical realism and isolationism. The few true isolationists among us would indeed return us to the moral and strategic shipwreck of the 1930s, but no realist of any stripe would. The main difference within realism, in turn, revolves around the argument of whether hegemony or the equilibrium of the balance of power is most conducive to peace. Again Muravchik ignores all this, leading him to such logically impossible statements as: "[I]f the mightiest nation fails to lead, world politics will lack equilibrium." Just the reverse is the case, at least if plain English is the right measure of meaning: The existence of a hegemon obviates equilibrium—which Webster calls "a state of balance between opposing forces or actions"—and equilibrium obviates the existence of a hegemon.

Muravchik's neo-Wilsonianism leads to other distortions as well, as with his full-throated projection of American exceptionalism. Robust American leadership "might [encourage] more accommodating behavior from other states who know that they have little to fear or distrust from a righteous state", he says, and, "Aside perhaps from the French, the only people averse to American leadership are the Americans." This, to put it mildly, may be doubted. Muravchik also misreads Bosnia. "World politics could easily degenerate into a series of Bosnias" unless we prevent it, and, asserting the indivisibility of world peace, he adds that "Russia's vicious attack on Chechnya was likely encouraged by the flaccid Western response to Bosnia." Muravchik's Bosnia story reads like a passion play with always obvious principles at issue—it is what happens when America doesn't lead and Europe or the United Nations tries to do so in its stead. Suffice it to say, not everyone sees the Balkans this way; rather than work up inductively from the evidence, Muravchik's Bosnia is power planed, sanded, and shimmed to conform to his interpretive architecture of post-Cold War U.S. policy.

In this way of reasoning, Muravchik is one of a diverse group of craftsmen—including, it could be, certain editors familiar to the devoted reader of these pages. The reference to editors is not random; a core piece of synecdochic evidence marshaled by Muravchik as evidence for the isolationist tendency is that "never have the three major journals of foreign affairs been so at one in their appeals since the end of the Cold War for reducing America's role abroad." (These he identifies as *Foreign Affairs*, *Foreign Policy*, and *The National Interest.)* Muravchik is correct about the journals, but not about what their attitudes mean. Left unmentioned is the fact that the Bush and Clinton administrations both, and the foreign policy elites in the Republican and Democratic parties, remain faithfully wedded to American

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internationalism. True, both parties nowadays believe that they can do everything necessary in foreign affairs with substantially fewer resources—the absent-minded, de facto isolationism of the "cheap hawks"—but neither party favors ending America's global alliance structure. Indeed, majorities on either side of the Senate aisle favor expanding NATO, recent Chinese behavior has put to rest most doubts about the future of the U.S.-Japanese security treaty, and both parties support the expansion of U.S. security obligations in the Persian Gulf exemplified by the creation of the Central Command and the Fifth Fleet. Isolationism is not stalking the halls of power.

WHY THE THREE journals have disagreed with both administrations is not hard to fathom. Politicians and bureaucrats tend to be present-oriented, practical people, while the scholars and intellectuals who write for foreign policy journals indulge more readily in far-flung prognostications and theoretics. The typical sin of the former is habit, of the latter failure to appreciate the inertia of the governmental process and the heavy overhang of history. It is one thing to say, as Eric Nordlinger does, that it would be best for the United States if its Cold War obligations to Western Europe, Japan, and Korea did not exist (and had never existed); it is another to specify how we might offload them without catalyzing general insecurity and several major regional wars in the process.

While Muravchik blends a profound pessimism about the world with an ebullient optimism about the power and wisdom of the United States, Nordlinger manifests the reverse instincts: The world is a homeostat with a natural knack for righting itself but America is a Don Quixote with way too many weapons surrounded by a bevy of Sancho Panzas, each sounding like Joshua Muravchik. His long and ponderously written defense of neo-isolationism comes with a twist, however; while he opposes U.S. military and political engagement abroad, he advocates an active liberal project to spread American values and free trade to spark American prosperity. The basis of his argument is that detaching politico-military activism from what he calls "concurrent" foreign policy goals "creates room for an autonomously defined liberal project. It allows for the moderated, unilateral, and multilateral pursuit of a principled, focused, well-leveraged, and thus reasonably beneficial liberal idealism." This is isolationism reconfigured, sounding more than a little like a variety of Quaker neo-pacifism.

Nordlinger argues that not only is detachment best for the future, but that it would also have been better for the past. Soviet failure, he believes, had little to do with American efforts; indeed, the mechanics of containment drove many neutrals into Soviet arms and helped Moscow in ways otherwise unavailable. Worse, the Soviet threat to Western Europe after 1945 was much exaggerated; it was instead the formation of NATO and the encircling of the Soviet Union that really started the Cold War. Moreover, going abroad also involved the United States in "morally unacceptable" actions and, more fundamentally, its activism is best "depicted as weakness, conceptualized as the loss of autonomy." True American independence and autonomy are served by vigilant non-engagement; hence Nordlinger, with palpable self-satisfaction, depicts himself as neither hawk nor dove nor owl but eagle, a "keen sighted, high-flying, remotely perched, and thus eminently well-protected" bird.

There is more. Nordlinger argues that isolationism reconfigured, as he defines it, better fits American culture and character than any form of internationalism, and—really the key contention—isolationism isn't dangerous because the "United States is strategically immune in being insulated, invulnerable, impermeable, and impervious and thus has few security reasons to become engaged politically and militarily." Consequently, aside from protecting the international sea- and airlanes to and from the water's edge, "the strategy demands a true minimum of security-centered involvements beyond North America."

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The first response to such claims is, typically, how, in an age of nuclear weapons and intercontinental ballistic missiles, can America be invulnerable, and its energy and trade security assured? One response to the latter issue is that America should use less fossil fuel energy, stop trading its natural resources for Asian electronic junk, and restore economic autarky through "appropriate technology" and proper ecological husbandry—what we might call the Theodore Kacynzski approach to foreign policy. But Nordlinger will have none of this. The United States is not in decline; it is rich and could be richer still if it reduced its defense burden, and if it were not self-deterred from asserting its national economic interests because of security concerns with allies. Virtually all of America's trading partners are more dependent on us than we are on them, so junk those concerns, says Nordlinger, and use the leverage. If other countries still manage their trade for political purposes, and do so to amass state military power, it does not matter, because an isolated United States is invulnerable behind its oceans, non-threatening demeanor, and minimalist arsenal of nuclear weapons.

In effect, the heart of Nordlinger's view is that if the United States drastically truncates the scope of its politico-military interests, it can safely tolerate a wide range of others' politico-military predations. This is tantamount to achieving security by vastly diminishing its requirements, much as a homeless person is led to vastly redefine what is meant by shelter. Or, in the context of international politics, following William Saroyan, "If you give to a thief, he can no longer steal from you, and he is then no longer a thief."

Not that Nordlinger's proposals are unserious just because they flaunt a broad consensus. Even those unconvinced of his logic will find the exercise a healthy challenge to habitual thinking. In the end, though, it is Nordlinger's rigidity that does his provocation the most harm. Like Muravchik, he avoids distinctions among those with whom he does not agree. There are internationalists and nationalists (isolationists), and while some internationalists are "adversarial" and others "conciliatory", they are all maximalists to him. And like Muravchik he brooks no exceptions: Isolationism is always right, changing circumstances be damned. He may be headed down the road in the opposite direction from Muravchik, but he, too, is a road hog.

PETER RODMAN'S *America Adrift*, an 89-page extended essay, lacks the emotional angst that animates Muravchik and Nordlinger. While, like Muravchik, Rodman bemoans a growing consensus on "strategic escapism", one gets the feeling that neither this charge, nor the book's title, nor the effort Rodman takes to parry and thrust straight through the foibles of the Clinton administration's foreign policy, would be quite the same if this were not an election year.

More important and to the point, Rodman's approach is that of classical realist pessimism, and his focus is an "unromantic view of strategic interest" based on the analysis of "structural"—which is to say, geopolitical—realities. In short, Rodman is Kissingerian and, for the most part, he's good at it. Not coincidentally, the volume bears a slim foreword by the eminent Doctor himself.

Perhaps the best way to sum up Rodman's counsel is that the United States should do neither more nor less than it did during the Cold War, but about the same. Why? Because despite the end of the Cold War, less has changed than many think; most important among continuities is that neither Russia nor China is about to turn into a liberal free-market democracy anytime soon. Hence we must stay in Europe and Asia to reassure and stabilize those regions—not because there are communists there, but because stable international structures do not just happen by themselves, but must be nurtured and managed. And we have little choice but to carry the burden in the Middle East as well. Only with respect to the expansion of NATO, which Rodman favors, might we do appreciably more—again, not for new reasons but for old geopolitical ones: to

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build a canopy of peace over an area not historically well-endowed with it in the interwoven shadows of German-Russian relations.

Agree with it or not, Rodman's advice flows neither from triumphalism nor habit, but from looking at the world the way those who have to deal with it tomorrow morning must see it. It would be fine if an Asian balance could come to pass without extensive U.S. involvement, but history judges the prospect unlikely. It would be grand if Europe could cohere without an American role but, says Rodman more in sorrow than in anger, "Weaning the West away from dependence on American leadership looks like an impossibility." Rodman is no maximalist wedded to a theory of hegemonic stability; indeed, he inclines more to thinking in terms of balances. The problem, however, is that the raw materials for a global balance that does not require an extensive U.S. role are wanting, and wishing it were otherwise cannot of itself change the fact.

In this regard, Rodman is a conservative in the true temperamental sense; he fits the test as Owen Harries defines it:

> For conservatives, temperament should always trump doctrine. And the single best test of temperament is a person's attitude toward change. Conservatism is wary of change in general—always conscious that it involves loss as well as gain and is fraught with the danger of unintended consequences—and positively hostile to sudden, disruptive, radical change.[1]

Taking his bearings from the imposing overhang of history, Rodman recognizes that the U.S. global presence was built up from more than half a century of exertion, and that such exertion created new international political realities not bound solely to the problem of the Soviet Union, and that have not been washed away with it. One does not abruptly deconstruct such a reality without expecting a more than average quotient of global insecurity, instability, and war. Theoretical questions of primacy aside, status quo powers such as the United States are not wont to do such things, and a foreign policy tradition rightly criticized for its abrupt swings ought not to be encouraged to go swinging again.

That said, Rodman is open to criticism on two points. First, in the one area where he would have us do more—in Eastern/Central Europe—the discussion might have benefited from a more substantive assessment of risks and costs, and an acknowledgment that this issue today divides former Cold War companions above all others. Second, while it is easy to sympathize with the "what to do tomorrow morning" approach—and thanks to it there is more specific and practical advice in Rodman than in Muravchik and Nordlinger combined—it somehow does not satisfy. Even the most practically-minded of analysts must ask how, for example, Asians or Europeans are ever to evolve a means of ordering their own affairs if American "leadership" perpetually smothers the attempt? Can we forever reconcile Jeffersonian principles at home with a permanent global role so large as to threaten to do to America what a similarly conceived burden did to the Roman republic?

Rodman is entitled to his pessimism, for the world abounds with corroboration for it, but his close-in focus begs the most central structural question of all: If it took half a century to build up to the inevitability of American post-Cold War leadership, might it not take a careful decade or two to build it down again to a more moderate level of American participation in world politics—and is that, indeed, the right thing to do? Rodman doesn't say, but the answer, probably, is yes. □

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[1]Owen Harries, "Senator Dole is a Hypocrite", *The Spectator* (London), November 25, 1995, p. 24.

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Present at the Destruction

Dominic Lieven

Jack F. Matlock, *Autopsy of an Empire* (New York: Random House, 1994), 848 pp., $40.00.

David Satter, *Age of Delirium: The Decline and Fall of the Soviet Union* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996), 448 pp., $30.00.

TWO VERY surprising things happened to the Soviet Union under Gorbachev's stewardship. First, the regime crumbled at quite remarkable speed. In the second place, and even more surprisingly, it did so with relatively little bloodshed. In 1985 it would have been very difficult to predict either eventuality. Jack Matlock makes no attempt to pretend that he did so. Instead, he comments that at the time of Gorbachev's ascent to power he expected the eventual triumph of democracy in the USSR and hoped that his grandchildren would live to see it.

To be sure, already in the early 1980s there was compelling evidence of the long-term decline of the USSR. Though the precise extent of Soviet economic difficulties was debated hotly by Western experts, no one could reasonably doubt that economic growth was (at best) extremely slow and that the gap between the USSR and the capitalist world was widening rapidly. Linked to this and equally apparent was the sharp decline in ideological conviction, especially in the capital cities and among the younger generation. This in turn was connected to the rise of anti-Soviet nationalism, which Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone and Hélène Carrère d'Encausse among others had analyzed very persuasively already in the 1970s. By the end of the Brezhnev era it was sensible to argue that the Soviet regime would have great difficulty in reversing these trends and that a resolute attempt to do so might well endanger political stability. In 1985, however, it could not reasonably be predicted that the Soviet political elite would both promote a radical reformer to the general-secretaryship and (more astonishingly) sustain him in power while he dismantled the pillars on which not merely the communist regime but also the multi-ethnic empire itself were based. Precedent, Russian and Soviet political culture, and indeed common sense suggested otherwise, for the Soviet regime in 1985 was by no means yet faced with the sort of crisis of existence which makes such dangerous policies readily comprehensible.

Nor indeed could even longer-term predictions about secular decline and final disintegration be made with great confidence. Apart from the obvious fallibility of all such long-term predictions, the failure of the Soviet regime was relative rather than absolute. The collapse of Soviet communism's legitimacy by 1985 owed much to the fact that, under American hegemony, peace between the major capitalist powers had been preserved for four decades since 1945 and their wealth had increased greatly. By contrast, in the previous thirty years, both communism's capture of Russia and its subsequent expansion to China and Eastern Europe was owed above all else to the wars of 1914-18 and 1939-45 between the capitalist great powers and the depression of the 1930s. In 1985 there was no immediate reason to expect a reversion to war and depression, but American hegemony was clearly less complete than had been the case two decades previously, and the rise first of Japanese and then of Southeast Asian economic power was certain to cause problems for both domestic political stability in the West and for the management of the global political economy.

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The most implausible scenario of all, however, was that the Soviet political elite would surrender power and tamely allow their state to disintegrate with barely a shot fired in its defense. Whatever their other failings, the communist elites were supposed to be supreme tacticians of power. Lenin and Stalin had sacrificed millions of their compatriots to establish and strengthen this regime. No doubt their heirs were a softer breed, but they were scarcely the parliamentary foxes whom Pareto so despised, and whose weak-kneed aversion to the use of force he saw as fatal to any regime's survival.

The history of empires certainly gave no cause for optimism about the peaceful demise of the USSR. Sensing the relative decline in their international power and prestige and a corresponding strengthening in anti-imperial Serb and Romanian nationalism, the rulers of the Habsburg Empire sought in 1914 to arrest both tendencies by a dramatic display of military force. The First World War resulted. The decline of the Ottoman Empire was longer drawn out and entailed many wars and some appalling examples of large-scale "ethnic cleansing." Between 1912 and 1923, as collapse reached its final stages, 62 percent of the Muslim population fled from areas conquered by the Christian Balkan states and 27 percent of them perished. Parts of Anatolia were depopulated and the Armenians became victims of full-scale genocide. The collapse of the British Empire was better managed and did not occur in the midst of war between great powers. It nevertheless entailed a number of vicious conflicts, of which those in the Indian subcontinent, Palestine, and Ireland stand out not merely for the loss of life involved but also because of the resulting instability in these regions even many decades after the empire's demise. With these precedents in mind one can only marvel at the relative bloodlessness of the Soviet collapse thus far.

Among possible lines of explanation for the USSR's collapse, two in my opinion are particularly useful. They are, on the one hand, the impact in 1985-91 of contingency, personality, and chronology; on the other hand, the long-term importance of ideology and of its decay. Matlock is especially strong on one, David Satter on the other.

Among the many strengths of former Ambassador Matlock's book, the greatest are the insights he provides on personalities, perceptions, and conflicts within the top Soviet ruling elite. It was in these circles that the reforms were launched that resulted in the regime's collapse. Not until the spring of 1988 did a broader public begin to play a major role in Soviet politics and only in 1990 did political movements truly get beyond the communist elite's control. Even then the regime's disintegration owed much to the personalities of Gorbachev, Yeltsin, Kravchuk, and Kryuchkov (to name but a few), as well as to their misperceptions, ambitions, and conflicts. Among Western experts Matlock was unique in enjoying ready access to these people and possessing the confidence of many of them. His reporting of the conversations he had with them are fascinating, his judgment of their strengths and weaknesses usually sharp. This is never truer than when he blends his basic admiration for Gorbachev with recognition of failings that played their part in the USSR's collapse. These include illiteracy about economics, naivete about the severity of the nationalities problem, intellectual arrogance, a craving for popularity, and (most contentiously) a dislike for fellow politicians (of whom Yeltsin was the prime example) who were major independent and popular figures. I share Matlock's admiration for Gorbachev and his recognition that the latter's moral decency and clear-sightedness played a vital role in the relatively peaceful demise of an exceptionally unpleasant regime, never more dangerous potentially than when staring disintegration in the face.

CONTINGENCY, PERSONALITY, chronology, and accident are important in general in politics, and vital in times of war, revolution, and rapid change. They are almost by definition underrated by political scientists, for whom the analysis of structures

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comes more naturally. In this respect Matlock's history of the USSR's collapse is of particular value. In addition, however, Matlock does not shy away from moral issues and David Satter places them at the center of his account, something that an academic political scientist (let alone a Sovietologist) would be extremely loath to do. Of all the wise statements made about Soviet communism, none in retrospect seems truer than Solzhenitsyn's comment that if the regime's subjects stopped telling each other lies, the system would collapse. A moral prophet who combines European "Old Right" religiously-based conservatism with a strong dose of "Green" ideas is a difficult figure for Anglo-Saxon social science positivism to comprehend, let alone take seriously. But Satter's book is really a narrative of how a society lives by the lie, of how (pace Alexander Zinoviev) its political rulers use police terror and hideously misuse psychiatry to enforce the community's complicity in the lie, and what happens when the bosses cease to enforce coercion and even indeed encourage a considerable dose of truthfulness.

Satter's book is in a sense a tribute to Gorbachev, whose dismantling of this system did owe something to moral qualms about its foundations. It is even more a tribute not just to Satter himself but also to many other Western journalists in the USSR who worked under immense pressure to expose vile sides of Soviet politics while trying at the same time both to preserve some sense of balance about Soviet society and to portray the warmth and basic decency of most Soviet citizens. But above all the book bears witness to a number of people of quite astonishing courage and obstinacy, who stood out against the lie and suffered the often appalling consequences. Of course very many of these people would be most uncomfortable fellow citizens not merely in Soviet circumstances but also for cozy bourgeois pragmatists like myself, which makes Satter's tale all the more impressive and moving.

His book is in a sense an anti-Soviet tract. It is "unbalanced." The ordinary citizen of the USSR did not experience psychiatric abuse, labor camps, or even overt political coercion. But all of these were essential for sustaining this particular polity and society. In a sense, Western journalists were a final court of appeal for the "cheated and insulted" of Soviet life, and had no option but to fulfill this role if they were to do their job. But Satter's book is not propaganda. It does also seek to portray a Soviet life beyond that of the dissident and of the Muscovite *intelligent*. It has the journalistic strengths of authenticity and evocative description of people and events, and it is powered by a commitment to human dignity. When Satter describes the death of a child in post-Soviet Tver for lack of basic drugs and despite the devoted attention of doctors and nurses, this commitment and outrage finds targets other than the Soviet regime, and provides some down-to-earth explanations for why ex-Communists are at present favorites to defeat Yeltsin in the June 1996 elections. In recent years, many former correspondents have published their reminiscences of life in the Soviet Union. Satter's book is one of the best in this genre, coherent in theme and powerful in its commitment.

UNLIKE A JOURNALIST, the American ambassador lived in salubrious circumstances and escaped the harassment of the Soviet police and most of the day-to-day travails of Soviet life. Even in comparison to his ambassadorial predecessors, Matlock had a privileged existence. Not merely did he have a bird's eye view of an immensely important and exciting period, but he also represented his country in Moscow at a time when the United States was uniquely popular in Russia and its long-held policy objectives were being achieved at dizzying speed. On the other hand, though he is too loyal to say so, Matlock was harassed by a stream of distinguished American visitors anxious to see perestroika for themselves and convinced that the ambassador's most pressing duty was to assist them in this endeavor. He had to analyze the enormously confused and quickly moving currents of

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Soviet politics, and then fight to ensure that other less informed perceptions did not prevail in Washington. It was not easy to manage his relationships with Gorbachev, Yeltsin, the Baltic leaders, and other antagonistic groups in the USSR so as to preserve the confidence of all of them, and the influence on their behavior that this confidence could entail. According to Matlock, managing George Bush could at times present equally daunting problems.

Matlock himself was deeply involved in Soviet high politics: though of course he notes the collapse of the Soviet economy that occurred during his time in Moscow, his analysis of the causes of the USSR's disintegration does not really integrate the economic and political. At this point the two aspects of his book—part autobiography and part history—do not quite gel. It was after all of vital significance that in the first four years of his rule Gorbachev promoted two quite contradictory economic policies, neither of which squared very easily with the strategy of political democratization that he began to pursue at the same time. High inflation, the goods famine, soaring budgetary deficits, and the creeping breakdown of exchange mechanisms played a big role in the Soviet regime's collapse. If glasnost did the most to wreck the regime's legitimacy in 1988-91 by exposing the horrors of its past, the population's faith in its rulers was also devastated by economic disaster. Equally, though nationalism became a crucial factor in Soviet politics at this time and most republican leaders felt they had to wrap themselves in a national flag to legitimize their power, it is also true that economic collapse was a vital factor in republican separatism. Moscow no longer had the economic resources with which to control or woo local leaders. On the contrary, in order to provide their local populations with basic services and thereby preserve their own power in an era of increasing democracy, the republican leaders had to seize control of local enterprises, deny taxes to the center, and distance themselves as far as possible from the economic chaos that Moscow's policies had created.

In Matlock's view, Gorbachev's two biggest mistakes were his mishandling of Boris Yeltsin and his failure in 1987-90 to make it clear that the Balts were a special case, uniquely deserving of independence, and to offer far-reaching autonomy to the other republics when most of them would still have been willing to remain within a reconstituted and truly federalized union. Both arguments are powerful but so is part of Gorbachev's defense against them. He himself told Matlock subsequently that it would have been politically impossible for him to compromise over Baltic independence in 1989-91. Any attempt to do so would have resulted in his removal from power by hardliners, already infuriated by the loss of Eastern Europe and wholly unwilling to contemplate the dismemberment of the USSR. Though it would not be possible to advance an equally plausible defense of Gorbachev's handling of Yeltsin in 1987-9, it is true that once his rival became Russia's leader the Soviet president faced major problems. Precisely because Russia constituted so huge a part of the USSR's population and resources, the Soviet regime had always been careful not to allow the emergence of a separate Russian Communist Party leadership, which would inevitably challenge the central authorities. In just the same way, no chancellor of Imperial Germany could exercise effective power unless simultaneously he was minister president of Prussia, and all schemes to federalize the United Kingdom and accommodate its Gaelic fringe have broken down over the fact that the kingdom of England is too large a unit not to dominate the rest, but the United Kingdom too historic to be comfortably dismembered.

PERHAPS A HISTORIAN based in London might be permitted two final comments on empire and on Russian history. Ignorance about Russian history was universal in Soviet ruling circles and rather typical also of Western Sovietologists. The history of the last sixty years of Imperial Russia revolved around the czarist regime's attempt to mod-

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ernize Russia's economy and society, not by use of the Petrine or Stalinist fist but rather through liberating individual energy and creativity. The government's key dilemma was to combine this strategy of modernization with the regime's own survival, the preservation of political stability in Russia, and the maintenance of the multi-ethnic empire. Knowledge of this era would have forewarned Gorbachev, together with many Western Sovietologists, about many of the pitfalls, contradictions, and possibilities of the reform program that he was launching.

Matlock's book is called *Autopsy of an Empire*, and indeed use of the word empire has now become rather fashionable in describing the former Soviet Union. In most cases this does not add up to much more than the assertion that empires are wicked and now defunct. The Soviet Union was wicked and is now defunct, therefore history (and by implication progress and even God) has rendered judgment on the USSR, which is best kicked into history's dustbin with the curse of empire attached to its name.

In fact it is worth being a little more precise when talking about the Soviet Union as an empire. Empire means great power. It means to rule directly and without consent over far-flung territories and many peoples. It has implications as regards resources, ideologies, expansionist tendencies, and even cultural styles. To be worthy of the name, an empire should also play a major role in shaping not just the international relations but also the values and culture of an historical epoch. By almost all these definitions the Soviet Union was an empire. But it was the empire of an ideology more than of a nation, closer to the Ottomans and to the Habsburgs of the Counter-Reformation era than to the European maritime empire of the late nineteenth century.

For many reasons empires appear redundant in the second half of the twentieth century, their only hope of survival being to consolidate their peoples as a single national community. This is not entirely impossible. China is the most impressive example of a great historical empire that is nowadays seven-eighths of the way toward becoming a nation, its mandarin language and high culture seeping down into the tribal roots over the millennia, rather as Rome's civilization might have created a European nation by now had the empire survived. Inheriting the Russian empire, Soviet rulers did not have to build a nation from scratch, but they did not have two millennia behind them and anyway, as regards consolidating a single community in Soviet Northern Eurasia, the czarist past was of equivocal use.

The Soviet regime placed its main hope on ideology and progress. Pride in being equal members of the world's most progressive, fair, and prosperous community would overwhelm the consciousness of ethnic difference. For a time between 1945 and the early 1960s it seemed that, for many Russians and non-Russians alike, the dream might actually come true. By the 1970s, however, the familiar dilemmas of Russian history were reasserting themselves: backwardness; the need for modernization from above; the necessity to square individual initiative with political order and the regime's survival; the problem of retaining the loyalty of non-Russians to an empire that they had never consented to join and that offered them less freedom and less prosperity than existed in the West. The whole point of Soviet communism was that it was supposed to release Russia from this historical conundrum. In a sense faith was supposed to move mountains. More than anything else the history of the Soviet Union is the story of this faith, of its impact on the land and peoples, and of the results of its failure. The basic point is that faith does not usually move mountains and the attempt to use it for this purpose generally causes great suffering and disenchantment. □

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The Bureaucrat Spy

Russell Jack Smith

Robert M. Gates, *From the Shadows: The Ultimate Insider's Story of Five Presidents and How They Won the Cold War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 604 pp., $30.00.

CHATTING TOGETHER, former Central Intelligence Agency officers, now old men but once pioneers who built CIA and ran it for the first twenty-five years, on occasion nod in agreement and say, "We had the best of it, my friends." The veteran CIA men recall the zestful years when CIA was the leader in pursuing a heady Cold War mission, when the organization was still unencumbered by a restrictive bureaucracy, when Congress exercised a benign and cooperative oversight, and when the American press was friendly and respectful in its dealings with the agency charged with anticipating foreign threats to the nation's security.

Robert M. Gates entered CIA toward the end of this halcyon period, and the history he recounts of the ensuing twenty-odd years is strewn with untidy crises and a mix of CIA successes and disasters, brilliant insights, and woeful miscalls. Gates describes these various episodes even-handedly and in great detail. Despite a reputation he is purported to have among some CIA colleagues as aggressive and confrontational, his tone throughout this account is equable, reasoned, and dispassionate.

But though Bob Gates says at one point that he regarded CIA as his true home base, the fact is that nearly half of his Washington career was spent in the White House where, as a National Security Council staff officer, or as deputy national security advisor, he played an active role in formulating national security policy. This fifty-fifty blend of intelligence officer and policymaker is unique to Gates. In CIA's early days a high wall stood between intelligence and policymaking. Agency leaders regarded the organization as an *instrument* of policy, never its formulator or advocate. And previous to Gates no top CIA executive had ever served alternately in intelligence and policymaking positions. In his several roles in these two realms Gates, by his account, kept the two activities entirely separate. Some critics within CIA did not always see it that way, however, and contended that Gates' self-admitted "hard line" stance toward the Soviet Union had politicized and biased Agency analysis to favor a tough anti-Soviet policy. To this charge, Gates makes a detailed and documented rebuttal, and it is left to the reader to decide whether or not the line drawn was exceedingly fine.

At the outset Gates announces that he intends to break new ground in recounting those years "from Vietnam to the collapse of the Soviet Union":

> Drawing on personal experience at CIA and the White House, as well as knowledge of CIA documents and activities never before revealed or declassified, I want to tell what really happened. . . . I want to challenge the proliferation of myths and revisionism, and to challenge the conventional wisdom on important events and personalities of the period.

Certainly no reader can complain that Gates is sparing of evidence in supporting his account of events. The book is densely packed—indeed it teems with quotations from official CIA estimates and memoranda, memos recording White House and Agency meetings and conversations, internal CIA memos, and inter-office notes and letters. When one adds to this imposing collection such examples of Gates' excellent memory, or superb record

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keeping, "Between 10:00 and 10:15, Jim McCullough . . . told me Casey had just collapsed. . . .", it is hard to fault the author for either laziness or imprecision. It is possible, however, that historians and other scholars may be frustrated by the lack of precise notation for many references, especially those drawn from personal files or correspondence, notations that would enable them to pursue other aspects of the material besides those used by the author.

Gates reveals again and again that he possesses a discerning eye in appraising the personalities and characters of people he worked with in Washington. Among CIA directors, he is unsparing of both James Schlesinger ("among those who were in the Agency then, Jim Schlesinger remains the most unpopular director in CIA's history") and Stansfield Turner (a "man regarded with deep hostility and dislike by many in and out of the Agency and intelligence community, then and now"). About William Colby, the only director he portrays with whom I served directly, Gates takes an appropriately two-edged view. After stating that "Colby to this day remains controversial in CIA circles", he comments: "I saw Colby then, and now, as a reform Director—as someone from the inside prepared to make changes in order that CIA do its job better. . . ." William Webster gets only accolades: "Webster was a godsend to the Agency . . . he brought to CIA . . . leadership, the respect of Congress, and a sterling character." But it is William Casey who gets the fullest treatment.

As a subordinate, Gates saw both Casey's flaws and strengths clearly. The flaws were not unanticipated at the time of Casey's appointment as DCI. Many observers worried that Casey's role as President Reagan's campaign manager suggested looming politicization of the Agency. But at the time a former CIA top executive expressed to me a different take:

> The thing that worries me about Casey is that he will come down here thinking he can take up where he left off in OSS. During the Second World War OSS sent him to London with little or no training and he began running agents into Europe. I'm sure he thinks any smart guy can do it now just as well as then.

By Gates' account this was a remarkably prescient prediction. Casey, says Gates, "had only one real hero: William J. Donovan", the head of OSS. "If Donovan was willing to cut a few corners to accomplish the mission, so was Casey." Moreover, "When Casey had been an intelligence officer in OSS, there was no congressional oversight, no body of intelligence law, really no rules or regulations." And Gates goes on to document Casey's headstrong style on repeated occasions, most particularly in the complicated affairs of Nicaragua and the Contras. Gates also faults Casey for his contempt of Congress and his hostility toward the press, both attitudes having served him ill. He notes that Casey had "his own foreign policy agenda and, as a Cabinet member, pursued that agenda vigorously and often in opposition to the Secretary of State."

But Casey was also, in Gates' view,

> one of the smartest people I have ever known. His intellectual curiosity was deep, and he met with and read an extraordinary variety of people . . . liberals, conservatives, wackos, authors, and businessmen. His door was open to them all.

Of the six presidents who held office during Gates' Washington career—Johnson, Nixon, Ford, Carter, Reagan, and Bush—the two who impressed him most favorably were Jimmy Carter and George Bush. Carter, especially, is his candidate for upsetting Gates' oft-cited opponent, "conventional wisdom." After noting Carter initiatives in approving strategic and conventional military programs, later expanded by President Reagan, Gates summarizes:

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> Carter's record in dealing with the Soviet Union . . . was far more complex and successful than commonly believed at the time or since. Indeed, he was the most consistently—if unintentionally—truculent president in relations with the Soviets since Harry Truman.

George Bush too had qualities not always perceived by "conventional wisdom." For starters, "George Bush was tough. He could take a punch and get back up. There are numerous examples from his public life." While it is true, in Gates' judgment, that Bush had the support of "the best national security team since the Truman administration",

> It was Bush who set strategy, who decided to push for German unification, who decided how to deal with revolutions in Eastern Europe, who decided how to deal with a collapsing Soviet Empire. He was the master of tactics, from when to call a foreign leader to the need to make a splash with a new arms control proposal. His instincts were sure. . . .

DIVERTING AS THE portraits of these major figures are, the heart of this densely detailed book lies in the myriad of play-by-play accounts of incidents and crises in the national security arena during the period 1969 to 1992. If there were any significant incidents in that period not dealt with here, I cannot recall them. The accounts are virtually case studies of the interplay among the White House, the Department of State, the Pentagon, and CIA. The names heading sections of the book describing the problems addressed—Cuba, Nicaragua, Iran, Afghanistan, Grenada, and so on—read like the syllabus for a college course on late twentieth-century world history. Unfortunately, Gates chooses to organize his presentation almost entirely on a chronological, not thematic, principle. This obliges him to lay the treatment of an individual subject aside for a time and return to it, after time has passed or some other crisis has intervened, some pages later. This creates a choppy effect at times, the most glaring example of which is his discussion of the attempted assassination of Pope John Paul II in May 1981. After two pages on the subject, it is dropped and then resumed briefly 105 pages later.

Quite properly, the dramatic collapse of the Soviet Union is to Gates the most significant event of our time. No one, Gates asserts, foresaw that collapse:

> Political and historical revisionism notwithstanding, no one in American government—in Congress or the Executive—believed that the imminent collapse of the Soviet Union was a real possibility until very late. The inevitability of the collapse was, in the West, an article of faith politically and of analysis intellectually. But the reluctance to forecast specific timing was born simply of uncertainty and political self-preservation.

If the assertion is correct, if no Soviet observers in the National Security Council staff, the Department of State, the Pentagon, the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, or the senators and representatives on the foreign relations committees or their industrious staffs foresaw or forecast the collapse, then what justification has there been for singling out CIA and charging it with failure? The answer is simple and direct: It was CIA's responsibility to foresee the event and forecast it. As the national intelligence service, CIA is charged with the task of alerting the president and the Congress in a timely fashion to an event whose ramifications could jeopardize the security of the United States. If it failed to do so, regardless of extenuating circumstances, then on this occasion it failed in its mission.

Gates makes the best possible case in defense of the Agency's performance.

> CIA's record—literally thousands of assessments, briefings, and monographs, public and classified over a thirty-year period—makes clear the Agency:
>
> ■from the late 1960s onward accurately described the growing economic, political, and social weakness of the Soviet Union and its worsening systemic crisis;

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- accurately portrayed the futility of tinkering with the system and pointed out how Gorbachev was undermining the old system without embracing a new one;

- and by 1988-9 was warning of a deepening crisis, the potential for a rightist coup, and possible collapse of the entire system.

For a clincher he cites the 1991 report by a panel of outside scholars commissioned by the House Intelligence Committee to evaluate CIA's work on the Soviet economy: "We conclude . . . the CIA's reports have been of high quality, timely, and useful to policymakers."

Much of the criticism of CIA's performance, or lack of it, in predicting the demise of the USSR has centered on the Agency's economic data. Gates says that he himself was

> never comfortable with our estimates in Soviet military spending—especially in dollars. . . . As a noneconomist, nonstatistician, I was hard-pressed to quarrel with the methodology. But I . . . believed instinctively that, in this communist variant of Sparta, the burden of military-related spending was far greater than the 14-16 percent of Soviet Gross National Product . . . perhaps somewhere between 25 and 40 percent.

After expressing this peculiarly personal caveat—an extraordinary disclaimer by the deputy director responsible for Agency economic analysis—Gates surely does nothing to strengthen either his case or that of the Agency by stating that CIA was then in "hot water" with the Defense Department for suggesting that Soviet military procurement was leveling off and "the last thing [Secretary of Defense] Weinberger needed was CIA analysis that suggested Soviet defense spending was slowing." In any event, CIA economists themselves were warning by 1990 that statistical analysis was "much less informative than in the past", given the deterioration in the stability of the Soviet economy.

> CIA urged, instead, focusing on qualitative assessments of the Soviet economy as more revealing than the statistics. Policymakers at the time heeded this advice and grasped the magnitude of the crisis we were describing. . . . How ironic that critics later would use the statistics CIA warned against as evidence that it had missed the crisis altogether!

Certainly, the economic crisis was a key element in the collapse of the USSR, but a more determining factor was the course of action taken by Chairman Mikhail Gorbachev. Indeed, if there is extenuation to be found for CIA or the others who failed to foresee the imminent collapse of the USSR, it is to be found in the person of this committed Communist who instituted a system of reforms intended to strengthen his Party and his country, but which had a contrary effect. His first move was to establish glasnost, freedom of discussion. "Through glasnost and a new look at Soviet history", writes Gates, "he exposed the myths and lies that had been central to preserving the authority of the center and the party." His action can be likened, it seems to me, to a workman who systematically removes all the mortar between the bricks of a building without realizing he has doomed it to collapse. "Without authoritarian central control of the economy and society—buttressed by myths and fear—the Soviet system could not survive", Gates declares.

But why was Gorbachev blind to the likely consequences of his actions? Gates suggests only that he "lacked vision." I suggest that after lifelong immersion in the Soviet repressive system Gorbachev did not recognize its essentiality. To him, it was merely a part of the environment, an aspect that could be improved upon. But taking it all in all, an observation by Henry Kissinger quoted by Gates best sums it up: "If you were setting out to destroy the Soviet Union, would you do it any differently?" □

Russell Jack Smith is a former deputy director for intelligence in CIA. He is the author of *The Unknown CIA: My Three Decades with the Agency* (Brassey's, 1989).

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Making Lemonade

Ambrose Evans-Pritchard

Robert Kagan, *A Twilight Struggle: American Power and Nicaragua, 1977-1990* (New York: The Free Press, 1996), 903 pp., $37.50.

FIDEL CASTRO WARNED the Sandinistas not to hold real elections. "The people can make mistakes", he told them, acidly. But the "comandantes" thought they knew better. They convinced themselves that the mass organizations of the Sandinista party would deliver a crushing victory in February 1990, in spite of all that had happened since the Revolution.

The Bush administration assumed that the Sandinistas would win too, writes Robert Kagan in his massive study *A Twilight Struggle: American Power and Nicaragua, 1977-90*. President Bush and Secretary of State James Baker had pushed for the elections as a graceful way to disengage from a nasty dispute that had consumed far too much time and passion in Washington. They hardly expected the motley and chaotic opposition to mount a real challenge. Practically speaking, they had written off Nicaragua.

It was the first election ever held in which a Marxist regime was voted out of power. The whole world was watching, and the whole world got it wrong, especially the pollsters. A month before the vote in February 1990, the American firm of Greenberg-Lake released a poll showing President Daniel Ortega ahead of the benevolent matriarch, Violeta Chamorro, by a margin of 51 to 24 percent. It was surely the biggest fiasco in the history of the polling business, proof alone that Nicaragua had become such a closed society that a large chunk of the population was too frightened to tell strangers the truth. I was in the press room in Managua when the results came through, and I have to admit enjoying the ash-white faces of my colleagues as they began to realize that the Nicaraguan Revolution they so loved had been rejected by a landslide.

By then the Sandinistas had crossed the Rubicon. If they tried to annul the election, the prospects were clear: war, poverty, and isolation. Their defeat changed the world's perceptions of U.S. policy in Nicaragua at a stroke. To their own surprise the Republicans could now make a fair case that they had been right all along about Nicaragua. Bernie Aronson, the assistant secretary of state for Latin America, called reporters into his office to tell them that the Bush administration had "turned lemons into lemonade."

Kagan was a key player in the long Nicaraguan drama. He was a member of the State Department's policy planning staff in the Reagan administration. As a speechwriter for Secretary of State George Shultz he was the first to articulate the "Reagan Doctrine" of communist roll-back in vulnerable outposts of the Soviet client empire. He then served as a lieutenant to Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams, helping to turn the Contras into a serious resistance movement—and living through the nightmare of the Iran-Contra scandal when the crusade came perilously close to toppling President Reagan. But he remains scrupulously detached. The name Kagan does not appear in the index. This is history, not apologia.

He has spent five years of his life writing the definitive book, battling all the myths and half truths remaining from the propaganda wars. It is hard to imagine that *A Twilight Struggle* will ever be surpassed for its scholarship, depth, and good sense. Opening the pages of this colossal study you know at once

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that this is going to be *the book* on the subject, and all else is cut-and-paste, or polemics, or mere journalism by comparison.

For Kagan the election was a great moment. The establishment of democracy in Nicaragua was a vindication of U.S. policy, he argues, even if it was a messy business getting there. He credits Reagan for pushing the Contra cause, and he credits Bush for giving the Sandinstas a way out at the end—"an alternative to the grim choice between perpetual war and disastrous surrender."

The meta-theme of his nine-hundred page work is that subtle shifts of policy in Washington have dramatic effects in a country like Nicaragua. Whether it wants to or not, the United States is doomed to play the role of a great power with imperial responsibilities. The Carter administration was slow to understand this. In 1977 the State Department decided to make Nicaragua the first test case of the "new foreign policy", a down-payment on Jimmy Carter's pledge to push for human rights around the world, "particularly in those countries that depend on the United States for their very survival." The choice of Nicaragua for this démarche came easily. Columnist Jack Anderson had been calling President Anastasio Somoza "the world's greediest dictator." Liberal Democrats were exercised about it. So Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher agreed to a de facto suspension of all aid to Nicaragua.

Few people in Washington saw it as anything more than a symbolic statement. "Not only was Nicaragua deemed strategically insignificant, but the possibility of dramatic change in this insignificant country was remote", writes Kagan. "Somoza's opponents were weak. The Sandinista guerrilla forces had been all but wiped out by the National Guard since 1974. The CIA estimated the number of guerrilla fighters at fifty."

It was a serious misjudgment. "These small and rather haphazard decisions in Washington blew down across Nicaragua like a hurricane." The abrupt change of signals from the State Department led to a ferment of activity among the opposition groups. Nicaraguans waited for the Carter administration to indicate what kind of government it wished to put into office. Nothing happened. Somoza calculated that he could hang on to power after all.

The new assistant secretary of state for Latin American affairs, Viron Vaky, argued that the United States should promote a viable non-communist alternative to Somoza. But he was opposed by Anthony Lake, then the State Department's director of policy planning, one of the stalwarts of the "non-intervention" moralists. As the drift went on through the turbulent year of 1978, the Sandinista Front seized the initiative with a stunning commando raid on the Nicaraguan National Palace. It catapulted the guerrillas into the forefront of Nicaraguan politics. Analysts at the Pentagon and CIA were always behind the curve as the FSLN prepared for insurrection. They discounted the "hit-and-run type" strikes because the Sandinistas were unable to capture and hold towns. General Dennis McAuliffe, commander of U.S. forces in Latin America, told Congress just weeks before the revolution that Somoza's forces were "entirely capable of dealing with the threat." Lulled into a false sense of security, President Carter continued to refuse Somoza's requests for arms. When the White House made a last half-baked effort to stop the creation of a "Castroite" regime in Nicaragua, it was already too late.

It is an article of faith on the Left that the Sandinistas were forced into the arms of the Soviet Union, against their wishes, in order to save the revolution from the implacable aggression of the United States. This view dominates the literature on Central America, and it is more or less embedded in the universities of the United States and Europe. Kagan has performed an invaluable service by correcting the record once and for all, before an important chunk of history is permanently disfigured.

"The Sandinistas were eager suitors of Soviet patronage—more eager, in fact, than the Soviets were to act as patrons", he writes. By March of 1980 they had signed a party-to-party agreement with the Soviet Communist

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Party, as well as secret military protocols to begin receiving arms from the Soviet bloc. "Remember, this was the strong Soviet Union. We thought it would last", Humberto Ortega confided to Kagan. "We thought the Soviet Union was as rich as the United States. We truly believed that the utopia existed."

THERE WAS a good deal of naivete in Washington about the character of Sandinismo. Kagan takes the *New York Times* to task for propagating the myth that "committed Marxists" had been forced to break away from the movement, and that the FSLN was planning to call free elections. It was all eye-wash. The Sandinistas saw themselves as a Leninist vanguard party, and Kagan describes how they moved with impressive dispatch to eliminate anybody in their way. Within three months of the revolution on July 19, 1979, the new police and army had launched "Operation Sandinista Fist", arresting hundreds and perhaps thousands throughout the country. Left-wing groups that were not under Sandinista control were crushed. The leader of the Socialist Party was arrested. The offices of the "ultra-left" newspaper *El Pueblo* were raided, and several of its staff were imprisoned. "Journalism has a right to be free", declared Joaquín Cuadra, the army chief of staff, "but it does not have the right to attack this process, even indirectly." The non-Sandinista elements in the Junta were kept as window-dressing, but exercised no real power. Within a year the most popular leader of the conservative opposition, Jorge Salazar, had been assassinated by Tomás Borge's security police.

"We radicalized our model to look more like Cuba", Humberto Ortega told Kagan later in a surprisingly frank exchange. "We wanted to copy in a mechanical way the model that we knew, which was Cuba, and we identified with it . . . we didn't want to follow other models." It was a standard hard-left operation: neighborhood block committees, party-controlled trade unions, collectivization of the peasants, the lot.

Contrary to modern mythology, the first serious stirrings of guerrilla warfare in Nicaragua had nothing to do with the ex-Guardia in Honduras. Groups of ex-Sandinista "kulaks" started attacking police outposts in a battle against the seizure of properties. One unit was led by "Dimas", a Sandinista hero who had "liberated" parts of the Nueva Segovia during the revolution. Kagan calls it the "invisible rebellion of the summer of 1980."

The establishment of a Leninist state had to be disguised. A Sandinista party paper, known as the 72-Hour Document, spelled out the methods employed to keep "imperialism" at bay and use the private sector as "bait for getting foreign capital." Washington had an incentive for pretending not to see the strategic deception. "Denying that the Sandinistas were Communists put off the day when President Carter could be accused of having 'lost' Nicaragua", writes Kagan. Hoping that the Sandinistas could still be bought off, the Carter administration poured aid into the country. When hard evidence started coming in that the Sandinistas had turned Managua into the quartermaster's office of the Salvadoran guerrillas, the Carter administration helped cover up for them.

The Republicans had no illusions, of course, but, contrary to general belief, President Reagan had little appetite for a show-down with the Sandinistas when he took office in 1981. Nicaragua was already lost, and that humiliation was hanging nicely around the neck of the Democratic Party. He sent Assistant Secretary of State Thomas Enders to tell the Ortegas that they could keep their revolution, so long as they did not try to incite revolutions in the rest of Central America. White House aides James Baker and Michael Deaver pressed Reagan to focus on his domestic agenda. The administration had more important things to do than squabble with liberal Democrats over a bankrupt coffee republic with a population of three million. The country was not worth the candle.

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But the Sandinistas pushed their luck too far. Convinced that history would soon sweep Marxist allies into power across the isthmus of Central America, they increased their clandestine support for the FMLN in El Salvador. It was a disastrous mistake. Everybody in the Reagan administration was agreed about one thing: the need to stop another country falling into the Soviet orbit, especially in Central America. El Salvador had to be defended, and that meant taking the fight to Nicaragua itself. Years later General Humberto Ortega admitted that the Sandinistas had made a disastrous mistake. "We paid a heavy price for our international romanticism."

There was no real plan to create the Contra resistance. "In the end", Alexander Haig recalled, "the decision to go covert was a decision almost by default." He regarded it as a failure of the foreign policy-making apparatus. The Nicaraguans were plotting and scheming in exile, and the Argentines were already training some ex-Guardia in Honduras. The United States was offered a chance to buy into an existing operation. Interestingly, President Reagan "was profoundly averse to violence" and doubted that a covert operation would do much to influence the course of Nicaragua's revolution. One official told Kagan that "Reagan has the reputation of being a gunslinger, but he was the most cautious, conservative guy in those meetings."

Once the die was cast, however, there was no turning back. The Contra forces mushroomed into the biggest guerrilla insurgency in Latin America, much to the astonishment of their handlers at Langley. In hindsight it has to be asked whether the whole endeavor was worth it. On the one hand, the Contra war scared the wits out of the Sandinista leadership. The comandantes felt compelled to curtail the supply of arms to their Salvadoran comrades in order to appease swing voters (mostly Democrats) in the U.S. Congress. El Salvador and Guatemala did not fall to Marxist revolutions—though they came very close to doing so—and that fact alone was of critical importance in the psychology of the late stages of the Cold War. On the other hand, the imperatives of the Contra policy ultimately led to Iran-Contra, crippling President Reagan so badly that his domestic policy was all but paralyzed for the last two years of his second term. The fevered efforts to keep the Contras alive after Congress cut off aid had serious collateral effects. The supply efforts were subcontracted to drug smugglers, creating an impression that the U.S. government was mixed up with cocaine trafficking. It may be false, or it may be closer to the truth than officials from the Reagan administration care to admit to themselves, but whatever happened there are now large numbers of people in the United States who believe that CIA and the Pentagon are suspect. Trust has been lost.

On balance, Kagan seems to argue that it *was* worth it. The redeeming achievement is the establishment of democracy in Nicaragua. I do not want to quibble with this, because the country is obviously a much freer place today. But was democracy really established? The Sandinistas may have lost the presidency but they did not lose control of the military, the police, or the apparatus of state security (even though the latter was abolished in theory). General Humberto Ortega continued as head of the armed forces. Many of the same enforcers from the Sandinista Interior Ministry accused of death squad abuses were still holding sway in the small towns of central and northern Nicaragua years later. After the Contras laid down their arms and returned to civilian life a large number were killed. Some were picked off in the middle of the night; some, like Contra commander Enrique Bermúdez, were assassinated in the open. The Contras were betrayed. Not perhaps the well-heeled Contra politicians that Kagan dealt with at the State Department; they landed on their feet, of course. But the campesinos who fought the hard battle: they were hunted down by a Sandinista military now being funded indirectly by the United States. Doubtless, it was naive to expect anything else. □

Ambrose Evans-Pritchard is the Washington correspondent for the *Sunday Telegraph* (London).

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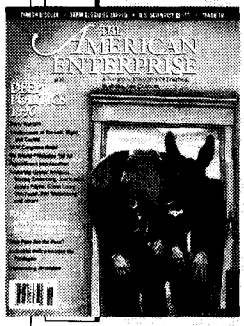

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Walter C. Clemens, Jr., Robert F. Ellsworth, Ivars Gutmanis, Lionel A. Hurst, Geoffrey Kemp, Richard L. Walker, Lennox Wattley

America's Grand Strategy:

YOUR HEADLINE, "Where Are We Going?" (Spring 1996), and the answers suggested by James Kurth ("America's Grand Strategy") and Christopher Layne ("Less is More"), certainly raise the right questions at the right time. Since the end of the Cold War, U.S. foreign policy has been confused. Neither the Gulf War nor the Bosnia deployment nor the Taiwan Strait crisis settled very much. Foreign policy has been dominated by mercantilists, neo-isolationists, and sophisticated Cold War nostalgists.

Until this March, neither the opinion polls nor the focus groups in the Clinton or Dole campaigns showed any significant public interest or concern with foreign policy. That began to change with the impact of the Taiwan Strait crisis. President Clinton's visits to Japan and Korea, then Moscow, in April have further boosted the media's attention to foreign policy.

The United States certainly has the power to be a "global hegemon of the regional hegemons" (Kurth), or to create and sustain a balance of power system in East Asia (Layne), but whether our political leaders have the determination, skill, and subtlety to follow either suggestion—which would require changing public opinion—remains to be seen. Our national interests in East Asia would fully justify the effort: our important interest in access to the giant markets of the region, and our vital interests in reducing the levels of nuclear armaments and in limiting the risks of conflict on the Korean peninsula, across the Taiwan Strait, and in the South China Sea.

Over the past few years the White House has told North Korea how it should or should not arm itself, Japan how it should organize its economy, China how it should treat its own citizens, and both China and Singapore how they should treat American citizens. In most of these cases the administration either lost the issue or was forced to back down very substantially.

This reflects a shifting balance of power between the United States and Asia. Paradoxically, however, the tensions among the Asian powers themselves and their resistance to regional security cooperation means that stability in the region will continue to depend on the willingness of the United States to play a leading role in managing the power balance, as we did in the Taiwan Strait crisis in March.

A defining feature of the next quarter century in international politics will be the emergence of the Chinese juggernaut, the biggest non-*status quo* power of them all. With over one billion people and with an economy growing at around 10 percent a year, on a path to overtake the United States as the world's leading economy, China comes onto the international stage with an identity, history, and presumptions distinct from those of any other state. The Chinese feel acutely an era of 150 years of humiliation and subordination, dating from the 1842 Treaty of Nanking, that they say is now coming to an end. They look forward to re-establishing what in their eyes is a natural hegemony in Asia, and cannot be expected easily to tolerate loss of face in their cultural (or civilizational) area. They are also trying to act like a world power—although an awkward and incomplete one. Beijing has sold missile components (and probably M-11 missiles) to Pakistan and tried to support Iranian ambitions in the Gulf. They demanded entry to the World Trade Organization on terms that were unacceptable to virtually all the members.

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They have been seizing territory in the South China Sea from Vietnam since they took the Paracel Islands in 1974; but their taking of Mischief Reef in February 1995 from the Philippines marked a disturbing new overreach. It affected the American national interest in freedom of navigation, as the sea lines of communication from East Asia to the Persian Gulf pass close by. Our Seventh Fleet uses the route for access to the Gulf, and 70 percent of Japan's oil imports pass through these sea lines.

The highly publicized Chinese surface-to-surface missile tests and live-fire exercises off Taiwan in late 1995 and early 1996 were a worryingly unsophisticated attempt to have an effect on U.S. policy and to intimidate Taiwan, as Taiwan's 1996 elections drew closer. Taiwan today is much more democratic, much more capitalist, and much more deeply embedded in the international system than it was in 1972 at the time of the Nixon-Kissinger opening to China, or in 1979 when formal ties were established, or in 1982 when some modest arms sales to Taiwan were balanced by a restatement of the One-China Policy. The weight of the argument today for some form of recognition of Taiwan as an independent member of the international system is overwhelming: the island is already a de facto independent actor with the world's second-largest foreign currency reserves, the world's largest trading state, a formidable military capability, and a democratically elected president and legislature. Handling this issue and tying China into the international system—not tying China down, as some would advocate—will require much more skill in both Washington and Beijing than either has demonstrated so far in the 1990s.

The Japanese have a critical strategic interest in Taiwan and they look to us to handle the matter in a way that maintains strategic stability in East Asia. The Japanese need to feel that with us their security is in strong hands and under wise guidance. In particular, they need to see clearly that we actually have a China policy that serves our national interests (as well as Japan's)—not just our sentimental or commercial or moralistic desires.

Beyond the resolution of the Taiwan Strait crisis earlier this year, our response to the order being shaped by China is the key issue, the crucial test, for an American national interest-based policy now and for the foreseeable future. The American national interests in China not becoming a global or even a regional military threat, and in China entering the international system more on our terms than on China's, serve not only our geopolitical safety and security but also our moral interests in human decency and, ultimately, human freedom. This does not mean a neo-containment policy. U.S. policy should be built around the fuller development of what Gerald Segal calls "an intricate strategy for tying China into the international system" (*Survival*, Summer 1995). This will require, first, that U.S. political leaders suggest to our public that the risks and rewards of pursuing our national interests in the wider world require the sustained and skillful exercise of American power.

Robert F. Ellsworth
U.S. Ambassador to NATO 1969-71;
Chairman of the Council of the International Institute for Strategic Studies (London) since 1990

"AMERICA'S GRAND Strategy" by James Kurth blends shrewd insight with reification of grand ideas. The former is marred by the latter. How can a realist scholar be so enamored of "analogue" as a basis for analysis? Of "nation" as an accomplished fact? Has there ever been an ethnically and culturally united "nation" in North America? Kurth's use of the term "nation" defies almost every scholarly definition. His call (repeating his previous essay in *The National Interest*) for an "Americanization project" to oppose "multiculturalism" is as unnecessary as it is undesirable. Had such projects wider appeal, it would be blood curdling. . . .

Kurth's infatuation with eighty-year cycles and a three-stage pattern of history implies a purpose and a plan to American policy that a Toynbee might find congenial but hardly a

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scholar who studies closely the processes by which decisions take place.

The ideals of others may be offended by the cavalier way that Kurth consigns most of what Yeltsin calls the "near abroad" to Moscow and the way he instructs Taiwan to stay on Beijing's short leash. My friends in places like Georgia, Estonia, Kazakhstan, and Taipei will not wish to obey a "boss" in Moscow or Beijing. To judge by the fates of Chechnya and Tibet, America's chances of bossing these regional bosses, as Kurth proposes, are pretty slim.

Kurth's essay sets the tone for others. Thus, Robert W. Tucker says that the "nation" rejected Woodrow Wilson's plan for a new world order. This kind of metaphysical thinking exaggerates national unity and ignores the fact that many Republican, as well as Democratic, senators wanted some kind of League after World War I. What scuppered the deal was Wilson's refusal to consider any kind of compromise.

When it comes to "nations", reification equals obfuscation. We can argue about what is good for the country and its citizens, as *The National Interest*'s contributors do, but forget about a U.S. "nation." There never was or will be in the sense of *ein Volk*.

Walter C. Clemens, Jr.
Boston, Massachusetts

JAMES KURTH'S cogent analysis of past U.S. foreign policy is an erudite dissection of the domestic and foreign issues which have formed U.S. responses to events abroad.

However, in regard to the former Union republics and NATO security realms, Mr. Kurth's assessment contains an ambiguity common among certain American scholars. In particular, the analysis contains two disturbing tendencies: gross simplification and outright omission.

Regarding the former, Mr. Kurth treats Ukraine and Belarus as being identical in their national tendencies, forces, and nationalistic ambitions. This is sheer folly. These two former Union republics represent vastly different histories, peoples, and future expectations.

Regarding the latter, the omission of the three Baltic republics from the analysis may be convenient—yet it is unrealistic. As far as U.S. policy is concerned, the future of the Baltic nations matters. Within the context of sustainable foreign policies by the United States and/or other NATO countries, it is not possible to ignore the independence of the three Baltic States. This being the case, why is Mr. Kurth silent on the issue?

Ivars Gutmanis
Washington, DC

Kurth replies:

Robert Ellsworth's account is characteristically sensible and wise. I am almost wholly in accord with his observations. (Although I may differ from him about what degree of formal international recognition of Taiwan's de facto independence is most practical, I believe that the United States should continue to defend Taiwan from China's military threats.) I hope that U.S. political leaders will follow his astute way of thinking about foreign policy.

Walter Clemens describes an article that I would enjoy reading and even criticizing, but which I did not write. Indeed, I made most of his points about the American variation of the nation in my earlier article on "The Post-Modern State" (*The National Interest*, Summer 1992). Clemens seems to be attacking some sort of, yes, reification. I will leave it to readers of my current article to decide if it represents this reified Kurth or the real one.

Ivars Gutmanis is quite right to criticize the omission of the three Baltic republics from my analysis. I should have been (and originally had intended to be) more explicit. I completely agree with him that the future of

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these nations matters. Indeed, I have thought this since I was young in the 1950s, at a time when the Baltics had been largely abandoned, and I was delighted to visit them in 1989 on the eve of their recovery of independence. I think that U.S. policy since has been highly effective in supporting the independence of these Western peoples, while respecting Russian security. The fundamental question is how this independence can best be maintained. Here I believe that Finland is an appropriate model: thoroughly integrated into the Western cultural realm and economic organizations, it is not a member of NATO. Nevertheless, the United States has long made clear that any Russian threat to the independence of Finland would be a major affront to U.S. interests and would result in severe economic and security sanctions. The United States should do the same for the three Baltic republics.

The World Shakes China:

BRUCE CUMINGS' ESSAY is a refreshing and perceptive piece that I heartily recommend for a balanced understanding of today's China, especially for all those "politicians, pundits, and academics" at whom he so deliciously pokes fun. His introductory passages, reminiscent of Harold Isaacs' *Scratches on Our Minds*, play up the metaphors of a half century of China-watching that have beclouded our understanding with their contradictions, oversimplifications, and misunderstandings. It is delightful for a change to be able to agree with Cumings. His thrust is that China is different and therefore hard to understand in Western terms given its moat-surrounded mentality.

Cumings brings us back to the cultural factor in designing our understanding of the Middle Kingdom. I have myself frequently maintained that when we use the word "China" it is like saying "Europe." We are not dealing with a nation-state in the Westphalian sense, but with an entity far more complex, difficult to direct or control from the outside. His view challenges conventional approaches and contrasts even with authors in the same issue of *The National Interest*. Robert Tucker opines that China's expansionism is a "crude fact" with which American policy must cope, and James Kurth argues that our challenge will be to "guide the rise of China's power." I join Cumings in disagreeing with the former and feeling that the latter involves unwarranted arrogation. The Chinese will adjust to the modern world in their own way, and as Cumings concludes, "We should do what little we can . . . but without illusions that we will make much difference."

He stresses a longer historical view of China's responses to the West, emphasizing the importance of economic factors for the future. Perhaps he might have given more than a passing nod to environmental and ecological problems about which Beijing makes pronouncements and provincial capitals merely shrug. His essay offers useful perspectives for those who will be watching developments in Hong Kong (1997), Macao (1999), and Taiwan (?), all scenarios that will not fit into the soundbites of the instant pundits on CNN.

His comparisons of China, which he calls a ten-thousand pound elephant squatting in the middle of the world economy, with Korea, obviously somewhat smaller, are a bit strained, however. Cumings is a preeminent researcher on Korea, but on that country his convictions have often led him to make assertions that are factually incorrect, as recently released Soviet documents have shown. Here his comparisons of Korea and China come off poorly. He states, for example, that the Kwangju incident of 1980 in Korea and events at Tiananmen in China in 1989 "can be compared in precise detail." Not so! Kwangju was an expression of centuries-old provincial antagonisms, there was no media blitz, no figure comparatively like Gorbachev was visiting, the military involvement and oppression lasted for days not

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hours, and it did not occur in the nation's capital.

Cumings is also incorrect in stating that "Chun was overthrown by massive street protests." Chun served out his term and handed over power in a constitutional manner. Given the prevalent view that Chun's group seized power because under Park he was about to be sent to an insignificant post on the east coast of Korea, it could be misleading to present him simply as Park's protégé.

Korea aside, however, Cumings has reminded us that a more balanced approach to China and the enigma it poses for the West at this moment in history requires us to broaden our understanding of Confucian cultures. His essay is delightful and artfully crafted reading.

Richard L. Walker
U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Korea 1981-6

Cumings replies:

I can also say that "it is delightful for a change to be able to agree with" Ambassador Walker—on China. On Korea, we have to agree to disagree; he is wrong and I am right on all the particulars to which he drew attention. But it is gratifying to find common ground with him on the central premises of my China essay.

The Shiprider Solution:

THE ARTICLE BY Elliott Abrams, "The Shiprider Solution: Policing the Caribbean" (Spring 1996), is disappointing in its shameless inaccuracies and flawed conclusions.

First, no matter how many marginally informed American writers repeat the slurs that are aimed at Antigua and Barbuda's leadership, our countrymen will never grow accustomed to this diet. Since 1951, adult Antiguans and Barbudans have been exercising the franchise in democratic elections; in every election except 1971, our people have freely chosen the ruling Antigua Labour Party to lead the country. . . . Daily, the opposition press savages the government; yet, no blood is ever shed at election time. Where is the partly free and unstable democracy of which Abrams writes? Antigua and Barbuda is run by a cabinet of ministers elected to parliament. It is shamelessly untruthful for Abrams to write that a single "corrupt family runs the place." The facts are being twisted to arrive at his flawed conclusions.

Second, there are thirty-eight sovereign small island-states in the world today whose material resources are seriously limited. Singapore counts itself as one at the United Nations. Its geographic size is exactly the same as Antigua and Barbuda's, though its population is as small as Jamaica's. Malta and Mauritius are also very small and resource-poor but their governments, like Antigua and Barbuda's, have been very successful in raising the standard of living of their people. San Marino, Liechtenstein, and Andorra—in Europe—have achieved high levels of human development and so have several Caribbean island-states. Examine the literature on our human development indicators and then compare the UN's studied findings against Abrams' slanderous claims. Abrams seems to be suggesting that a warped logic should control in the case of the Caribbean. Destroy democracy in order to save it; trample on sovereignty in order to protect it.

The descendants of former slaves and the descendants of former slave masters live peaceably in Antigua and Barbuda. We have a few lessons to teach the American people on how to get along and how to distribute wealth evenly.

Abrams has joined a chorus of experts who want to excuse the miserly approach that current U.S. policymakers have adopted in Washington. They have closed the small U.S. embassy in Antigua and Barbuda's capi-

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tal, shut down a tiny naval base on our northern coast, and regularly deny our students visas to study in the United States. They have closed the USAID office in Barbados, curtailed severely the assistance that they used to offer, and have joined a bevy of large countries in multilateral institutions that declare countries like Antigua and Barbuda "middle income/developed."

When the demand for drugs is reduced in North America and Europe, the Caribbean will be of even lesser importance to the United States. Until the United States controls its appetite for illicit drugs, even large and populous states in the Americas will continue to be put at risk. We will need all the help until that glorious day arrives. Retaining our full independence is our choice and we have several arrangements in place to ensure the survival of our sovereignty; no cup of pottage or pieces of silver will substitute for our freedom.

Finally, please point out to Mr. Abrams that the islands that the United States controls in the Caribbean—the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico—are clearly not better off than many in the region as pertains to crime and murder. Merely being there under the protective umbrella of the United States is no protection against these maladies.

Lionel A. Hurst, Ambassador
Embassy of Antigua and Barbuda

REGARDING THE ESSAY by Elliott Abrams on "The Shiprider Solution: Policing the Caribbean", I wish to point out one error in fact and in interpretation.

Mr. Abrams referred to a "1991 coup attempt by a radical Islamic group" in the context of the "racial differences and racially-based parties" which "are the problem in Guyana and in Trinidad and Tobago." It must be noted that the incident mentioned took place in July *1990* and the "radical Islamic group" comprised people with a political difference, not a racial difference, with the government of the time. Moreover, the immediate cause of the violent actions was a dispute over land.

Lennox Wattley, Minister-Counselor
Embassy of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

Abrams replies:

Me thinks the diplomats do protest too much. Plain-vanilla land disputes do not ordinarily lead to violent coup attempts in Trinidad or anywhere else. Antigua and Barbuda's problems are manufactured at home, and are not the product of reduced American aid levels. The mention of Singapore does not help Ambassador Hurst's argument much on this score, and the comparison between the stewardship of the Bird family in Antigua and that of Lee Kuan Yew (or for that matter of the prince of Liechtenstein) does little for his argument. Nor does it help that per capita GDP is two to three times higher in the U.S.-controlled entities than in his country. The crime rate is indeed higher in the U.S. territories, as it is in the United States. So what?

The World Trade Center Bomb:

LAURIE MYLROIE'S perceptive article on the World Trade Center bombing (Winter 1995/96) raises issues that go beyond the details of that particular case. I refer to a disturbing new trend, "megaterrorism"—acts of violence designed to kill hundreds, possibly thousands of civilians. Recent examples would be the attacks by the Japanese Aum Shinrikyo cult group with sarin nerve gas on the Tokyo subway in April 1995; Chechen rebels seizing thousands of hostages in their war against Russia; the attempt in late 1995 by Algerian extremists to sabotage a super-fast passenger train in France; and, most recently, Hamas suicide

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bombers in Israel.

What is unnerving about these particular events is that they could have been much worse. What would happen if a suicide bomber strapped chemical, biological, or even nuclear agents to his body prior to attacking civilians? Thousands of people could be killed in one attack, and, in the short run, there would be virtually no way to stop them.

The only comforting news is that several of the would-be perpetrators of megaterrorist acts have so far proven to be woefully incompetent. It turns out planning and executing dastardly deeds is not easy. Megaterrorists are most likely to succeed when backed by the full resources of a state. Thus state-sponsored terrorism remains the number one danger. Iraq, Iran, Syria, Sudan, Libya, and North Korea are pariahs for good reason. If their support for terrorism is not ended, the chances are that sooner or later a truly horrific event will occur. Predictably, at that point, Congress will take the subject seriously, and we will worry less about how proposed anti-terrorist legislation intrudes on our civil rights and more about how it assures our physical security.

Geoffrey Kemp
Nixon Center for Peace and Freedom

Mylroie replies:

Geoffrey Kemp rightly emphasizes the uniquely dangerous role that states play in terrorism. But he is probably in a minority. The latest fad is "loose networks." Yet we had better straighten that one out. As my article explained, the question of state sponsorship was not properly investigated then. The FBI refused to share the evidence with any other bureaucracy, but failed to investigate the question of state sponsorship properly itself.

There is rightly a growing concern about the use of unconventional agents in terrorism. But will that be done by states or "loose networks?" Aum Shinrikyo was an extraordinarily well-educated group, but they failed. Their sarin was poor quality, poorly disseminated, so "only" twelve people died and the group was caught almost immediately. It could have been much worse—if a state had been behind the attack.

The idea that "loose networks" have replaced states as the main sponsors of terrorism is a fraudulent issue, put on the national agenda partly by the FBI's failure to conduct a proper investigation of the Trade Center bombing. We must urgently determine whether megaterrorism, as Kemp defines it, is more likely to be carried out by states or "loose networks." I am inclined to think the former. □

Letters to the Editor

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An Offer Castro Couldn't Refuse—or Survive

Owen Harries

ONE OF THE REGULAR features in the lively new English magazine, *Prospect*, is called "Previous Convictions." In it, a contributor is invited each month to explain how and why he came to change his opinion on some issue. Introducing the series at the top of the page is a tart remark by John Maynard Keynes: "When the facts change, I change my mind. What do you do, sir?"

Keynes' question is one that could usefully be put just now to many conservative pundits on U.S. foreign policy. The "facts" of the international scene have changed drastically in the last few years; how much changing of mind has accompanied this transformation? Regrettably, in many instances the answer would have to be: Not much. Instead, what has been evident is the all too familiar phenomenon of people responding to change by energetically digging deeper into entrenched positions, pausing as they do so only to complain about the inconstancy of those who refuse to follow their example.

I've already discussed Robert Kagan in these terms in a previous Quarterly, but he is far from alone. Another example is provided by Joshua Muravchik in his new book, *The Imperative of American Leadership*, reviewed in this issue. When Muravchik offers an explanation of why, now that the Cold War is over, many of us have opted for a more discriminating and less "proactive" foreign policy than the one he favors, he does so not in terms of a rational (even if, from his point of view, misguided) response to changed circumstances, but in terms of a "collapse of confidence" in America or a "lethargy" on the part of the offending parties. Another example of unreconstructed thinking was provided at a Washington seminar recently, when a distinguished commentator who occupied prominent positions in both the Reagan and Bush administrations (Chatham House Rules, so no name in this instance) characterized the countries of today's Central Europe as "neutrals" stuck in a "no-man's land." For him the basic model of East-West conflict was clearly as serviceable as ever.

One can only go so far in discussing this whole issue in general terms before becoming a bore, and becoming bogged down in disputes over words. Better to focus on a particular example, which allows one to be more particular and concrete; and what better example to focus on than the emotional and contentious issue of American relations with Castro's Cuba, which came back into the news with a bang in the spring. Let me explain, then, why, after thirty-six years of being a tough guy on this issue, I have now changed my mind.

As long as the Cold War was in progress, and America's conflict with the Soviet Union was of overriding concern, Cuba mattered for two reasons. First, it was a geopolitical threat as an ally of, and potential base for, a

Owen Harries is editor of *The National Interest*.

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rival superpower, especially as it was strategically situated only ninety miles off the coast of Florida. As such it was the location for the most serious crisis of the Cold War. It also could, and did, provide significant numbers of troops to support Soviet ventures in Africa and elsewhere. Second, ideologically it threatened to contaminate and subvert Latin America and the Caribbean with potent Marxist-Leninist ideas and insurgency.

Some would argue that it was important for a third reason, because of U.S. concern over human rights. This, however, is not convincing. Disgraceful as Castro's human rights record has been, the United States tolerated similar, and even worse, violations in other Latin American countries over the same period without acting to punish or end them. In the case of Cuba, human rights as a foreign policy issue was much more a function of geopolitical concern and ideological hostility than an independent variable.

With the end of the Cold War, the rationale of the very tough policy followed by the United States toward Cuba over the last three and a half decades has collapsed. Cuba is no longer the strategically placed ally of an unfriendly superpower. The attraction and subverting power of Marxism-Leninism in the region, as elsewhere, has declined to somewhere between slight and zero. Objectively, then, there is no reason why Cuba should today have more importance attached to it than has been given any other obnoxious and inefficient Latin American dictatorship over the decades. It is extremely unpleasant for those who live under it—as is the case with many, many countries in the world—but in the larger American foreign policy scheme of things, it is no longer of great importance and should fade as a significant issue.

But that, of course, is not how things are, and this for several reasons. First, there are a large number of Cuban exiles in Florida with strong feelings on the subject, and they have political clout. For them Cuba is the highest priority, and they see the matter in simple, uncomplicated terms of good and evil, an issue to be determined on its own merits rather than one that has to be fitted into the larger pattern of American interests and obligations. If I were a Cuban exile that is the way I would see things—but it is not the way in which responsible policymakers can afford to see them. Neither the perspectives of exiles nor the politics of Dade County should determine American policy.

But the influence of the Cuban exiles does not in itself explain the salience of the Cuba issue. For they would not have such a high purchase on policy were it not for the fact that Castro has such a powerful ability to affect American emotions. I say Castro, and not Cuba, because in a very real sense what the United States has—and has had since 1960—is a Castro policy, not a Cuba policy: hatred of (and a fascination with) him has become an independent driving force. That, and the irrational fear that any step back from the policies of the Cold War will set in motion a wholesale retreat to isolationism.

THE RESULT OF all this is that today we have an absurd state of affairs in which the remnants of the grand, global strategy of the Cold War are being applied to a squalid local tyrant. Indeed, the policy of embargo has now been made tighter than it was when Cuba had real strategic significance, and in a way that virtually guarantees serious friction with other Western countries who choose to trade with the island.

"The circumstances", said Edmund Burke, "are what render every civil and political scheme beneficial or noxious to mankind." It is the inappropriateness of applying an old policy to new circumstances—reversing the Biblical error and pouring old wine into new bottles—that is the main cause of my changing my mind on America's Cuba policy.

But there are also some other compelling reasons. The existing policy has now been pursued for over three and a half decades, and at the end of that time Castro is still there and the plight of the people of Cuba is still abysmal. In other words, the policy is a

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resounding failure, and it is time to say enough and to try something new. Again, I have come to realize—and the crisis earlier this year over the shooting down of the two civilian aircraft was enlightening in this respect—that it is not only that U.S. policy has not achieved the desired end, but that it is counterproductive. There is actually a synergy between American toughness on the one hand and Castro's survival capacity on the other. Moreover, Castro is perfectly aware of this synergy and whenever he feels that his position is weakening—as, with the creation of the Cuba Council by diverse dissident groups in February, he almost certainly felt on this occasion—he manipulates things to produce a crisis that is intended to evoke a stern response from Washington. And, of course, Washington usually obliges, as it did in March with the Helms-Burton Act.

My change of mind was also prodded by John Chettle's eloquent argument in these pages ("The American Way", Fall 1995) that no dictatorship can withstand the full frontal impact—political, economic, cultural, social—of the United States for long. It is worth repeating its essence:

> One can lay down a general rule: Any despot inclined to maintain his position should avoid contact with the United States at all costs, even when—perhaps particularly when—the latter comes bearing gifts. Those rulers who have, for whatever reasons, lived by this injunction have enjoyed long and honored lives, and have been followed by crowds, weeping with apparent regret, at their funerals. Kim Il Sung of North Korea, Enver Hoxha of Albania, and Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran are testimony to this truth. . . .
>
> But the moment Americans get involved—with their endless soul-searching, their endemic ethnocentrism, their constant moralizing, their relentless desire to do good, and their well-placed faith in the ability of their own system to provide good governance—a despotic regime is in trouble. Fortunately, most despotic governments do not realize this, or, to the extent they do, they have an unbounded faith in their own ability to take the Americans for a ride, or to control the process of change. Such an assumption is not, on the face of it, illogical. Most despotic governments preside over peoples cowed by police power. Most have large armies. Most appear stable. But despite all this, once isolation has been breached, the result is well-nigh irreversible.

Current standards of polemics being what they are, it is perhaps necessary to point out that what Chettle is advocating as general policy, and what I have come to accept in the case of Cuba, is the *opposite* of an isolationist policy. It is one of full, multifaceted engagement. Nor is it a status quo policy, for its object is Castro's destruction. Given his understanding of the advantages of keeping his distance from the United States and maintaining a general atmosphere of hostility (something he shares with the other survivors listed by Chettle), it is likely that Castro would try to resist such a policy despite its enormous economic benefits to his country. But it would be very difficult for him to sustain that resistance for long in the face of a bland, persistent, American forthcomingness. It would be an offer he could not ultimately refuse.

Despite the combined weight of these various secondary arguments, it could be claimed that as long as the Cold War continued, its imperatives were overriding, and that—for both strategic and ideological reasons—they demanded an unyielding hostility to Castro. But now these imperatives no longer apply, and it is time to think again. When the facts change, what do you do, sir? □

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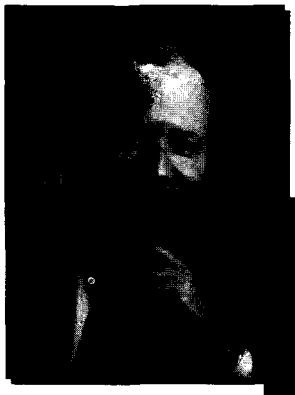

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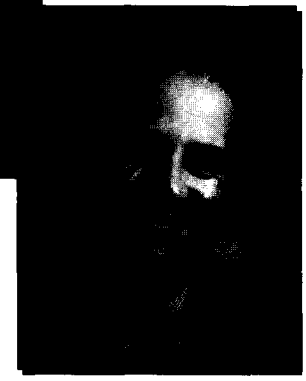

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